



From the collection of the

o ^z ⁿ ^m Pre^ainger
v ^a Library
t p

San Francisco, California
2006

Aug. 1948 300

For

Hopes
From Sam -

In memory of a very

helpful ~~person~~ ~~person~~

Spent with a lovely

Wise lady S.





NATIVE DAUGHTER

**THE STORY OF
ANITA WHITNEY**

By Al Richmond

Copyright, 1942, by
AL RICHMOND

Published by

ANITA WHITNEY 75TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE
170 Golden Gate Avenue San Francisco, California



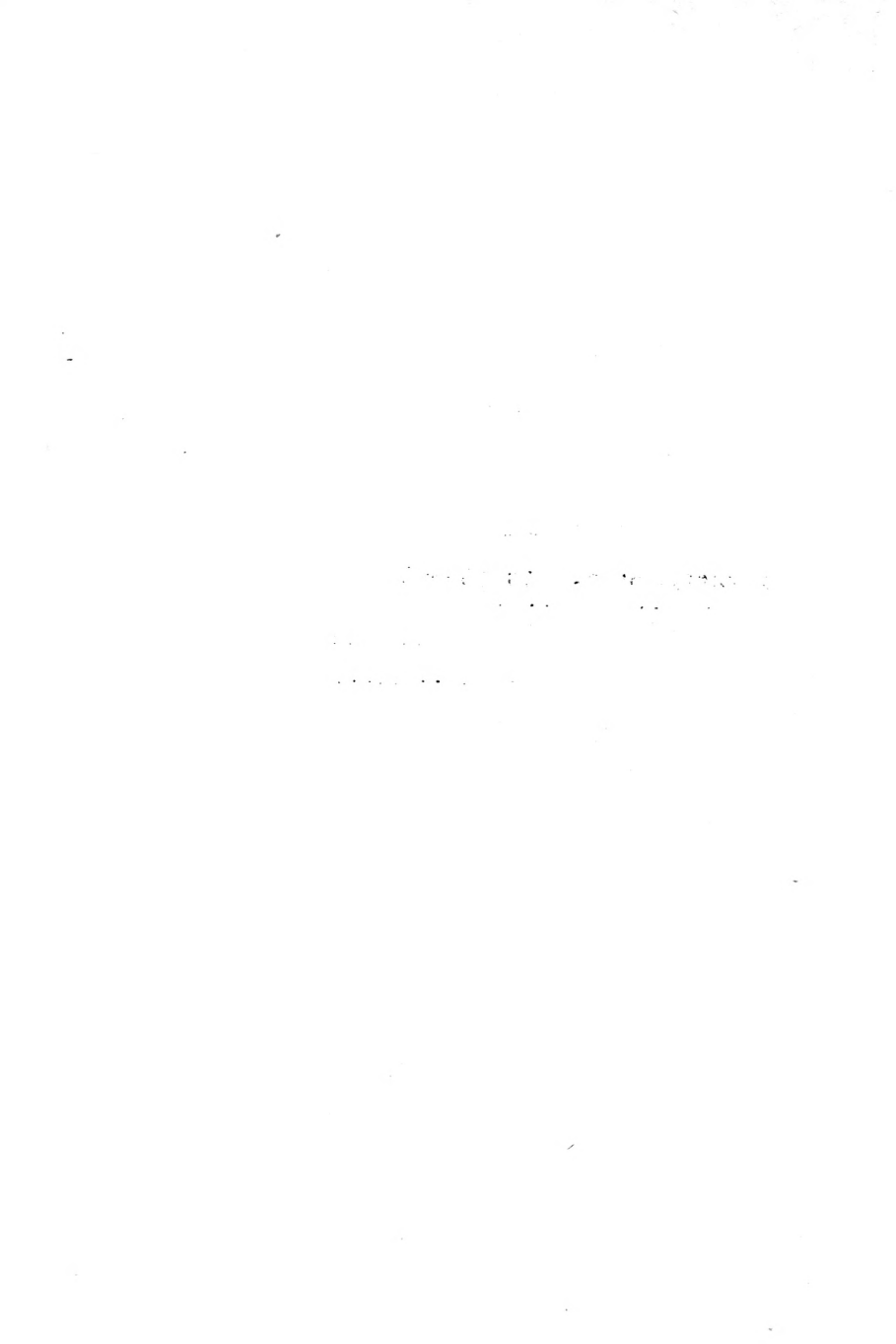
232



CONTENTS

I	The First Glimmer	11
II	Tender, Beautiful Years	17
III	"I Loved My People"	31
IV	From Suffrage to Socialism	47
V	War and Aftermath	66
VI	The Case of Anita Whitney	90
VII	Formative Years	141
VIII	The Great Crisis	151
IX	Best Known, Most Beloved	162
X	The Secret of Leadership	183

On the occasion of Anita Whitney's 75th birthday, July 7, 1942, this biographical sketch is intended as a birthday gift to her thousands of friends, comrades and admirers. Her life, long and rich, has been devoted to them and to those millions of others who still do not know her, but in time will come to love and revere her as those who know her do. For them this book is intended, and if it serves them even minutely as well as Anita Whitney has served, it will have served them well.



CHAPTER ONE

THE FIRST GLIMMER

The little girl, she could not have been more than seven, was wide-eyed at the vibrant brilliance which filled the vast rotunda of the Capitol Building. The gas jet flames, the source of all this illumination, sparkled through the varicolored crystals of great chandeliers which descended from the tall ceiling that soared upward and upward in a majestic curve to form the Capitol dome. The crowd that moved through this spacious chamber was as brilliant as the light. How beautiful were the ladies, their rich satins reflecting the glow of the lights! How imposing the gentlemen, stiff in their formal frock coats, elegant in their white gloves!

The little girl was awed not only by the physical splendor of the scene, but by the vague knowledge that these handsome ladies and gentlemen were America's great, its statesmen and soldiers, lawmakers and jurists. She clutched more tightly at the hand of her aunt who swept through the crowd with aristocratic ease. At times she glanced at her uncle, Justice Field, bowing stiffly in recognition of respectful greetings on all sides. Justice

Field looked like a Supreme Court justice should. He had a long, graying beard, its sparseness somewhat disguised by the sheer length of the hair which had remained. Similarly, he compensated for the barrenness of his smooth head, glistening amidst all this radiance, by the luxuriance of the remaining hair which rimmed his head, beginning at the chin and running up the jaws, then flowing from the rear incline of the skull over the nape of his neck. His strong face, built around a broad nose, was topped by thin-rimmed spectacles through which gazed alert and intelligent eyes.

Justice Field enjoyed his niece's manifest excitement. It was his inspiration that brought the little visitor from far-off California to the Capitol party. He had insisted that the little girl see all the sights Washington had to offer. Yes, he said, the White House and the Capitol were impressive by day. But the Capitol rotunda illuminated at night for a social function! Ah, there was a sight to fire the imagination of a seven-year old girl. And he was right. The little girl was aglow. The scene before her had driven from her mind the many fleeting images she had retained from the trip cross-country through the majestic Rockies, over Indian territory and immense unsettled plains which served only as grazing ground for buffalo, then past a series of ever larger railroad stations and towns as the train roared eastward. The little girl had known nothing but the Oakland of the 1870's, brightened by an occasional trip across the bay to San Francisco. For her the long journey to Washington had been an ever-mounting tide of excitement, now capped by the social elegance of the capital.

The hour was late for her, and natural drowsiness,

blended with the splendor of her surroundings, only heightened the feeling that this was some magnificent dream through which she floated on wings of soft exhilaration. Her big eyes shone, too overwhelmed by the total effect to detect detail. . . .

Of course, she was too little a girl to know that really the social season had not been up to par. Even had she been told, her mind could not comprehend why the failure of two leading Washington banks in the fall of 1873, at the height of the financial panic, should have dimmed Washington's social life. Nor could she have understood the peculiar nostalgia which permeated some sections of Washington society, fed by a resentment at the changes in the wake of the Civil War. This was a time of great change in Washington and social change has a sad effect upon the molds of social amusement.

The physical appearance and social habits of the capital could not help but reflect the deeper change in progress. The old taverns were replaced by hotels, and the sophisticated Washington correspondent of *The New York Herald* sighed, "Alas for those who love to take their ease in inns! The old taverns are badly replaced by the modern 'hotels,' so gaudy, so dear and so uncomfortable." With the proper touch of irony, *The Herald* correspondent suggested that a "college of heraldry" be endowed by the government to advise the new and ill-bred Congressmen on selection of a "crest, shield and motto" for their note paper, so as to "prevent some amusing mistakes that might occur, as others have occurred."

The anecdote of the season was perhaps most expressive of the contempt with which the representatives of the rising and robust bourgeoisie were regarded by the

old southern aristocrats and their snobbish northern friends. The story was told that a masquerade was to be given by Governor Shepherd at his mansion and the Congressional Library was crowded with those seeking designs and inspiration for costumes.

"What character can I take?" asked a new Congressman of a Tennessee belle, said to be "as witty as she is beautiful."

"Go as a gentleman," she replied, "and none of your friends will recognize you."

"Severe, but merited," was the curt comment of The Herald correspondent who could not resist publishing the witticism in his column.

With the same scorn he wrote of "the wives of western Congressmen in their new cheap black silks; their husbands in frock coats, dirty, ill-fitting gloves and colored neckties" and of "the department people, with ravenous appetites."

But the little girl could not distinguish the various personages. She moved among them entranced, oblivious of the deep rivalries, the petty social jealousies, so much a part of Washington society. For her, Kentucky belles and the wives of Ohio Congressmen were but one swirling, unbelievably wonderful mass. The shabby Southern aristocrats who salved the wounds of defeat on the field of battle with pointed witticisms at the expense of the victors had no virtues in her eyes which distinguished them from Boss Tweed's boys of New York. In her innocence, it was all too wonderful. Her head swam, and she sank into a state which in older persons might have been engendered by the lassitude of slow intoxication. The bright lights began to blur and the once wide-open eyes began

to narrow as her eyelids drooped under the increasing weight of sleep. The hubub of voices seemed far away, rising and falling as sound often did when she flapped her hands against her ears. She was relaxing into the soft down of contented sleep, wrapped in a fatigue brought on by sheer exhilaration and brimming joy.

Suddenly she was startled out of her drowsiness. Her aunt had gently nudged her, "Dear, the party is not over. We are about to see a stage performance!"

Before improvised footlights, there appeared a young woman, her face streaked with sorrow and drawn with hunger. She was clad in rags and a frayed shawl draped her shoulders. Her disheveled hair strayed over her forehead. Two little children clutched at her skirts, their faces raised in supplication. In sorrowful tones, the ragged woman recited:

Give me three grains of corn, Mother,

Give me three grains of corn.

It will keep the little life in me, Mother,

Till the coming of the morn. . .

Our little girl now felt pained and burdened. She was filled with anguish and humiliation. Who is that woman? Why does she weep? Why does she lament? What is she, so wretched and ragged, doing amidst all the elegant splendor?

"She is Ireland," the little girl was told. "She is hungry. The poor people in Ireland are hungry and this party was given so that food may be bought to feed them."

Hunger? Poverty? The words were new to the little girl and the concepts incomprehensible, except that they

conveyed that terrible sense of shame and pain she had experienced.

The little girl was Anita Whitney. And in the 68 years which have gone by, the stage-made image of poverty and hunger, symbolized in that figure of a woman with two children hanging on her skirts, has long eclipsed in her mind the brilliant elegance of that Capitol party.

In a sense it was the pattern of her life. She could have lost herself in the elegance, but it was disturbed and dispelled by the shadow of something beyond.

She was destined to witness poverty in all its sordid reality. The pain and shame were to be tempered by the resolve to remove their inspiration. The insistent question, "Why?", was to find an answer which went beyond the cause.

But the image remained. For to Anita Whitney it was the first awareness of social injustice, the first glimmer of social consciousness.

CHAPTER TWO

TENDER, BEAUTIFUL YEARS

I

Charlotte Anita Whitney was born in San Francisco on July 7, 1867, two years after the termination of the Civil War, two years before the famous golden spike was driven into the ground at Ogden, Utah, symbolizing the unification of the country with thin bands of steel which stretched from New York to the Golden Gate. She was the second of seven children in the middle class family of George Edwin Whitney, an attorney who later served as state senator from Alameda County.

In the Whitney household, the American tradition was a family heirloom. On her father's side, Anita could list among her ancestors five Mayflower pilgrims and a leader of the first Puritan settlement on Massachusetts Bay. Her mother, Mary Lewis Swearingen, was a descendant of a Dutch family, the Van Swearingens, who first settled on this continent in 1640 in Maryland. The most famous of her early American ancestors was Thomas Dudley who succeeded John Winthrop as governor of Massachusetts Colony in 1634. In Cotton Mather's chronicles of the

Massachusetts Colony, Dudley is praised for those Puritan qualities of intolerance, dogmatism, austerity, devotion to religion and a keen sense of business. A devotee of the church, Dudley nevertheless believed that the autocracy, which he in common with his Puritan peers deemed the perfect form of human organization, would best be served by a strong state which superceded the church and which should, in the words of one biographer, "enforce conformity as the superior, and not the handmaid of the Ecclesiastical organization."

When Dudley died at Roxbury on July 31, 1653, the last 19 years of his 77 years of life having been devoted to public office in Massachusetts, a poem in his own hand was found in his pocket. Its title was "Hate Heresy" and its message:

*Let men of God in court and churches watch
O'er such as do a toleration hatch.*

This severe, intolerant and autocratic Puritan strain was tempered somewhat in the conflict which later developed between the colonies and the English Crown, and by the time of the Revolutionary War, several of Anita's New England ancestors served with the revolutionary armies, most notably a William Cowen whose captain's commission, issued in 1775, is still among Anita's prized possessions. On her mother's side, too, two Van Swearingens served as officers, one a major in the Maryland militia, the other a colonel in the Virginia militia.

Anita's father had migrated to California in the early '60's from a small town in Maine. A man of poor health, he had come to California not only in search of a career, but to escape the rigors of New England climate. His

physical frailty was matched by a gentleness in his manner and an extreme tolerance in dealing with others. Anita cannot remember his having uttered a cross word to anyone. He was a very placid and considerate person, and of her two parents, Anita chose him as the recipient of her confidences and the arbiter of her difficulties with the rest of the world.

The elder Whitney was a man of culture, and he sought to instill in his children a feeling for culture, although his own was limited by the conventionalities of a New England upbringing. He read to them constantly from such works as Sir Walter Scott's Waverly novels and early New England poetry. On one occasion, he sought to read Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," but this created a minor storm, as mother walked out of the room in protest.

The mother had come from a Virginia family. Although her grandparents were genteel slave owners, her mother was a woman of some spirit and pioneer courage. Left widowed while still young, Anita's grandmother picked up her four daughters and went to California when the opportunity presented itself. But Anita's mother and three aunts seemed to lack this pioneer enterprise, and were marked by a strong attachment to southern traditions and conventions. Some of the Whitney children were strongly influenced by their mother's nostalgic attachment to her magnolia scented past. But not Anita; even as a child she was not attracted by the sentimental haze in which the old South was enveloped by its human remnants. She was her father's daughter, and in later life she valued most conspicuously one inheritance from him,

a passion for honesty and the courage to profess the truth and defend it.

II

Another influence in Anita's childhood was Supreme Court Justice Stephen J. Field, an uncle through marriage to one of the Swearingen girls. The Fields, having no children of their own, developed an extremely strong interest in Anita and her sisters. Several of Anita's childhood years were spent at the Field mansion in Washington, and later when she attended school in the east, all her Christmas vacations were spent with the Fields.

Justice Field was a conservative jurist, whose conservatism hardened with age and continued service on the Supreme Court, that pillar of encrusted conservatism. Although a Democrat, he was appointed to the bench by President Lincoln in 1863, at the height of the Civil War. Despite his affiliation to the party of rebellion, Justice Field opposed secession and sided with the North at least to the point of preserving the Union. His appointment seems to have been an attempt on Lincoln's part to cement California to the union (there was a strong rebel partisan faction in the state), avoid the aggravation of factional strife which the appointment of an easterner would necessarily have done, and to win wavering elements in the North who might have been alienated by a more radical choice.

Field joined the Supreme Court when Roger B. Taney, author of the notorious Dred Scott decision, was still Chief Justice. He served 34 years, until 1897, when age and poor health compelled retirement. His early years on

the bench coincided with the Reconstruction Period and he sided with his colleagues in emasculating the revolutionary content of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments, the juridical fruits of the Civil War.

He was an able letter-of-the-law jurist, a firm believer in the blinders which blanket the eyes of the traditional figure of justice. Within this self-imposed limitation on his vision, he was a man of high principle, great devotion to his work.

In keeping with the California pioneer legend, Field was supposed to have arrived in San Francisco a poverty stricken youth whose last dollar was spent for the first meal ashore. In later years, he was fond of telling anecdotes about early California life, and these tales reveal him as a daring young man possessed of great persuasive charms. One of these tales concerned an early campaign for the legislature when nominees stumped the country on horseback, riding from camp to camp, speaking to the people. This tale, worthy both as a commentary on Field's character and early California life, was recorded in his own words as follows:

"As I approached Grass Valley, then a beautiful spot among the hills, occupied principally by Mr. Walsh, a name since become familiar to Californians, I came to a building by the wayside, a small lodging house and drinking saloon, opposite to which a lynching jury were sitting, trying a man on a charge of stealing gold dust. I stopped and watched for awhile the progress of the trial. On an occasion of some delay in the proceedings I mentioned to those present, the jury included, that I was a candidate for the Legislature and that I would be glad if they would join me in a glass in the saloon, an invitation seldom de-

clined in those days. It was at once accepted and leaving the accused in the hands of an improvised constable, the jury entered the house, and partook of the drinks. I had discovered, or imagined from the appearance of the prisoner, that he had been familiar in other days with a very different life from that in California and my sympathies were moved toward him. So, after the jurors had taken their drinks and were talking pleasantly together, I slipped out of the building and approaching the man, said to him, 'What is the case against you? Can I help you?' The poor fellow looked up at me and his eyes filled with great globules of tears as he replied: 'I am innocent of all I am charged with. I have never stolen anything nor cheated anyone; but I have no one here to befriend me.'

"That was enough for me. Those eyes, filled, as they were, touched my heart. I hurried back to the saloon and as the jurors were standing about chatting with each other, I exclaimed, 'How is this? You have not had your cigars? Mr. Barkeeper, please give the gentlemen the best you have; and besides,' I added, 'let us have another—"smile"—it is not often you have a candidate for the Legislature among you.' A laugh followed, and a ready acceptance was given to the invitation. In the meantime my eyes rested upon a benevolent-looking man among the jury, and I singled him out for conversation. I managed to draw him aside, and inquired what state he came from. He replied from Connecticut. I then asked if his parents lived there. He answered with a faltering voice, 'My father is dead; my mother and sister are there.'

"I then said, 'Your thoughts, I dare say, go out constantly to them, and you often write to them, of course.'

"His eyes glistened, and I saw pearl-like dew drops

gathering on them—his thoughts were carried over the mountains to his old home. 'Ah, my good friend,' I added, 'how their hearts must rejoice to hear from you.' Then after a short pause, I remarked, 'What is the case against your prisoner? He, too, perhaps may have a Mother and a sister in the East, thinking of him as your Mother and sister do of you, and wondering when he will come back. For God's sake, remember this!' The heart of the good man responded in a voice which even to this day—now nearly thirty years past, sounds like a delicious melody in my ears, 'I will do so.'

"Passing from him, I went to the other jurors, and finding they were about to go back to the trial, I exclaimed, 'Don't be in a hurry, gentlemen; let us take another glass.' Then they again acceded to my request and seeing that they were a little mellowed by their indulgence, I ventured to speak about the trial. I told them that the courts of the state were organized, and there was no necessity or justification now for lynch juries; that the prisoner appeared to be without friends; and I appealed to them as men of large hearts, to think how they would feel if they were accused of crime where they had no counsel, and no friends. 'Better send him, Gentlemen, to Marysville for trial, and keep your own hands free from stain.' A pause ensued; their hearts were softened; and fortunately a man going to Marysville with a wagon coming up at this moment, I prevailed upon them to put the prisoner in his charge to be taken there. The owner of the wagon consenting, they swore him to take the prisoner to that place and deliver him over to the Sheriff, and to make sure that he would keep the oath, I handed him a 'slug,' a local coin of octagonal form, of the value of fifty

dollars, issued at that time by assayers in San Francisco. We soon afterwards separated; as I moved away on my horse, my head swam a little, but my heart was joyous. Of all things which I can recall of the past, this is one of the most pleasant. I believe I saved the prisoner's life, for in those days, there was seldom any escape for a person tried by a lynch jury."

Such anecdotes were more common than unique and these tales, the folk lore of the California pioneer tradition, played their part in shaping Anita's early attitudes.

III

The sum total of her childhood environment was a compound of such diverse strains as her father's mild New England liberalism, a still water backwash of the more turbulent abolitionism of the pre-Civil War days; her mother's southern gentility; the pioneer tradition; the more immediate circumstance of comfortable middle class economic security, and the intangible of a family heritage which dated back to the Puritans and the Revolutionary War and was intertwined with southern aristocracy.

Anita herself was shy and reserved as a child. One of her earliest memories, impressed upon her mind by the pain of its initial experience, is that of having to recite before a public school class. "I felt," she recalls, "as if the 40-odd pairs of eyes of my classmates were piercing my body, and the effort I had to make to control my voice would leave me faint and weak." In addition to this shy reserve, she also possessed honesty and integrity, traits encouraged by the tolerance of her father and his kind understanding.

Her early education was obtained in private and public elementary schools and San Jose State Normal School. The formal requirements of middle class standards for the young women of those days had been fulfilled by this scholastic career, but her father insisted that she attend an eastern college. He had a deep feeling for New England, and believed that an experience of the change in seasons was necessary for a true appreciation of American literature, and that somehow mere physical presence in New England, in the proximity of Boston and Faneuil Hall and the Cambridge elm would enhance one's understanding of American history.

Anita shied away from this trip cross-country to a life away from her family, amidst strange surroundings and strange people, but to gratify her father's whim she agreed to go to Wellesley for a year. She went with many misgivings. For her, books and study had no special attraction, and she had no particular ambition for the future beyond the narrow orbit of her home and the limited social life around it. But she went to Wellesley. She went for a year and remained for four.

IV

Historical records at Wellesley offer but a slight clue to her life and activities during four years at the college. There is no record of her holding office in any of the many student organizations; nor did she take part in dramatics, debate, or school athletics. Her academic interest seems to have been centered on the sciences. She took courses in botany, zoology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, but never joined the Microscopical Society, the

Zoological Society or the other enthusiasts' clubs. Associate editorship of the senior class magazine, *The Legenda*, seems to have been her sole participation in the public life of the school.

The senior class book of 1889 offers an amusing if skimpy commentary. It lists her as follows: Politics—Republican; Religion—Episcopalian; Literary production—statistics; Opinion of the opposite sex—"God bless 'em."

But as often happens, her failure to participate in the extravert manifestations of campus life was a reverse measure of the profound effects which Wellesley had upon her. She entered the college in 1885, a shy, self conscious and very handsome girl of 18, in that late stage of adolescence which, in a person as sensitive as she, is so receptive to influences we choose to call spiritual. And Wellesley was nothing if not spiritual. Her own recollections are the best gauge of what transpired within her.

"The autumn of my freshman year," she wrote many years later, "was one of unusual intensity of autumnal coloring. Even in that great land of outdoors from which I came I had never experienced the sheer loveliness of the outside world as I did now. Winter came upon us soon and the first snow storm came early in the evening, filling the air with flaky softness and covering everything with folds of whiteness and it thrilled me through and through. It was not that I had never seen snow before, but I had never seen it in the country where it lay unsullied and it appealed to my sense of mysticism as well as beauty. . . .

"Then on the heels of rather a severe winter, came spring, when almost like magic the fields were covered with green, the trees burst into bud and leaf, the birds

sang with sheer ecstasy. Here indeed was resurrection. The resurrection of nature which did find an echo in my soul, for I was, for the first time in my life, surrounded by a distinctly religious atmosphere and I had my first realization of a spiritual life within."

This poignant and poetic response to the first spring at Wellesley was in reality an outgrowth of the affinity between the awakening of life, the flowering of maturity within Anita and the similar phenomena, the "resurrection of nature," she observed in the world around her. And so it was with all the four years at Wellesley. They were tender and beautiful years which marked the slow blossoming and unfolding of a sensitive human being who became aware of her own existence in a deeper sense; they were years of enchanting self-discovery, of thrilling recognition that life within one's self was one with life in the natural world and all its phenomena. In Anita this process was not turbulent and disturbing; it flowed slowly, deep and placid, like some meditation. Her childhood had been sheltered. It had been spent in a family of girls, and neither economic nor other pressures had intervened to hasten maturity. The transition from girlhood to young womanhood was in its beginnings when she entered Wellesley and everything at Wellesley was designed to maintain the slow, even, almost majestic tempo of her growth and development.

She eagerly breathed in the beauty of the campus and its surroundings, the cloistered buildings, almost uniform in their religious motif, the gentle loveliness of the wooden New England countryside, the winding, even-tempered Charles River. She was deeply moved and molded by the religious atmosphere at the school.

Wellesley itself was in its youth then. It had been founded fifteen years before by Henry Durant, a Boston lawyer, who, upon the death of his only child, decided to consecrate his life and fortune to the service of God. He and his wife after seriously considering how their fortune would best serve God finally agreed upon endowing an educational institution for young women of modest means. So rare was the humility in which the project was conceived that it was willed that the institution would not bear the name of Durant nor hold any picture of him. "This is God's college," said Durant, and the phrase was oft repeated.

Daily attendance at chapel was, of course, obligatory. The 500 students filed in, and were seated according to classes, facing the rostrum and the large stained glass windows behind, through which streaked the rays of an early morning sun. On one side of the rostrum was engraved the Biblical inscription: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I: send me."

These words were engraved on Anita's mind.

Generally, the most clearly retained memories of her school years have a haunting quality. She saw life through those stained glass windows behind the chapel rostrum. Not that the campus did not reflect some of the social realities of the day. The woman's suffrage movement, the presidential campaign of 1888 injected themselves into campus life. Some of the students engaged in social work in nearby communities; others helped in missions. About fifty notables and foreign personages visited the school each year and delivered lectures, among them such unique characters as Queen Liliuokalani, last of the

Hawaiian queens who had been deposed in a putsch of American settlers and who came to the United States to plead her case, and Coquelin, the exotic French actor. Neither these activities nor personages evoked any deep or lasting response in Anita.

She read a great deal, Emerson and Lowell and Thoreau, whom she had known before; and George Eliot and Leo Tolstoy whom she discovered for the first time, Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" made the greatest impression upon her; its sensitive and beautifully told story, its wistful pathos and, above all, its typically Tolstoyan moral lesson were all designed to impress her.

Holidays were spent in excursions to the many historic landmarks in the vicinity of Boston. Concord and Lexington, Wayside Inn and Walden Pond, Faneuil Hall and Bunker Hill. They were all hallowed symbols to her. She was thrilled at the sight of them, and the events they connoted. Unconsciously as yet, there evolved within her a social attitude toward life, a fusion of Christian ethics and morality, in the finest sense of those concepts, and the American democratic ideal.

V

After leaving school, having received her degree as Bachelor of Science, Anita floundered for four years. She took a routine and desultory trip to Europe, six months of museums and landmarks. She tried teaching Sunday School in Oakland, but gave up when the rector evinced a greater interest in church dogma than in the recorded life and teachings of Christ. Activity in Collegiate

Alumnae organizations also failed to satisfy her still inarticulate quest for a life's work.

"I made an attempt to have the same pleasures and pastimes as the young people around me," she later wrote, "but I was always more or less conscious of a feeling of boredom, coupled with a dread of being thought different."

Then something happened which changed her entire life, set the course along which she traveled with inexorable logic toward her own fulfillment. . . .

CHAPTER THREE

"I LOVED MY PEOPLE"

I

In 1893 Anita attended a class reunion at Wellesley. On the homeward trip, she decided to stop off at the College Settlement in New York. It was a decision prompted by no special interest, but simply by a natural curiosity to see what college women, some of her classmates among them, were doing. She saw much more than she had anticipated, and the idle curiosity turned into avid interest.

The College Settlement house was situated then, as it is now, on Rivington street, the heart of the East Side in its heyday. The house itself was an old mansion, renovated and altered for its community purpose, and some half dozen college women lived there, keeping open house for the neighborhood, organizing and conducting varied activities for boys and girls, and venturing forth into the homes of the neighbors on missions of charity and social welfare.

The '90's of the past century and the first decade of this century are the score of years which provided the background for the epics of East Side literature. But the

authors of these books, Mike Gold's "Jews Without Money" and Samuel Ornitz's "Haunch, Paunch and Jowl," had been bred and raised on the East Side, understood it and rebelled against it, and then evaluated it in mature retrospect. For Anita, the sensitive young woman of 26 who had known middle class comfort and seclusion in Oakland, cloistered dignity in Wellesley and quiet elegance at the Field mansion in Washington, the East Side was a terrible revelation.

Its debasing poverty and squalor, its teeming tenements, its bed bugs and cockroaches, its babel and noise, its profusion of odors, its tragedy of maladjustment were so far outside the range of her past experience that she felt as if she had been transplanted into another world. And this was in 1893, the year of the great panic! Rivington Street needed no panic. It was the abyss where measurements of depth had lost their distinction. The great migration from Eastern Europe was at high tide. Human cargoes were dumped on New York's wharves and the East Side tenements became overstuffed warehouses, jammed with that precious commodity, labor power. The immigrants, "greenhorns," came to the promised land, hopeful but frightened, fair prey for any tenement shark, any sweat-shop operator, swindler or charlatan. Acclimatization to the new world, the breaking with old traditions and, at times, an ancient culture limited by the feudal idiocy of life in Eastern Europe, particularly in the ghetto villages from which the Jews came, was a terrible ordeal, rendered more difficult by the struggle for economic survival.

Anita could have escaped, back to Oakland and comfort, to recount with the aloof interest of a tourist the

things she had observed on the East Side. But she remained. The settlement house needed workers, and after her week's residence as a visitor was up, she was invited to join the staff. She gladly accepted. It was the first time she had observed poverty at first hand, and it violated her Christian and democratic precepts.

"Here," she said later, "certainly some cog in our social system had slipped. I wanted to know about it, I wanted to help change it. Here at last was something vital to be done and I wanted to have a part in it."

Her resolve required courage. At first, every step in her new life was a painful one, running headon into her shy reserve and aversion to sordidness.

"The first time I went into a rear tenement," she later recalled, "I stood at the door and peered into the darkness till I could see the rickety staircase ahead of me, the whole place sickeningly odorous from dampness, from lack of ventilation, from the fumes of the accumulated life of so many people. As I stood there I felt that I was on the brink of a perilous adventure. Could I go up to that room on the third floor to which I had been sent and get out alive? I was sure that I could not, but a thousand deaths were better than the ignominy of going back and confessing fear."

This initial trial was followed by many others, some of them humorous in the retelling, but terrifying in their experience. On one occasion, she remembers visiting an old woman to whom she took soup. At the woman's request, Anita read from the Bible, "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . ." And while she read this comforting promise of the hereafter, out of one corner of her eye she glanced apprehensively at the cockroaches, which

did not crawl but calmly *walked* up and down the walls and bed, terrified lest they come in her direction. Even then she could not help but think that the long vista of years before her would be dreary indeed if she had to endure them in the knowledge that a mansion without cockroaches was but the promise of a life hereafter.

One of her most terrifying memories is of being awakened in the middle of the night by the heart-chilling clang and the clatter of hooves of a horse-drawn fire wagon. On the East Side all the terrible forebodings stirred by the sound of a fire bell were generally fulfilled. Fire was a terror, an enemy who lurked in the dark and crowded tenements, and claimed his toll of victims each year. Anita and her colleagues dashed into the street, into the galvanized horror which gripped the entire neighborhood, pierced by shrieks and the wailing of women and the chantlike prayers of elderly Jews. It was not until morning that they learned a whole family had perished in the flames. . .

She remained at the settlement house for three months, participating in the varied life of a settlement worker, and then she was called home because of the illness and death of her father.

II

Rivington Street became her conscience, a disturbing and persistent conscience, one that would not be denied. After her father's death, she taught in private schools for a while, but always her mind reverted to Rivington Street and the questions and doubts it had instilled in her. She sought the answer in books, but they only posed other

questions, deeper and even more arrogant in their demand for an answer. She read Jacob Riis, whom she had heard speak in New York, and she learned about the Long Block in New York, Tuberculosis Row, as it was sometimes called, lined with tuberculosis-infested tenements which were coffins claiming their victims before they died. The tenants who inhabited these tenements knew of the hazards, the city knew them, the owners knew them, and still the tenements remained, and people moved in and lived and, more frequently, died; and every tenant paid rent, and each rental fee increased the dividends yielded by the property. She learned that some of the worst slum tenements on the East Side were owned by the Trinity Church Corporation.

"If everyone knows about these things, why do they go on? Is human life then so cheap?" Such were the recurring questions which gave her no peace. Not given to precipitate action, Anita began slowly to ascertain at first hand the answer to those questions. She helped open a club for boys and girls in the slum district of West Oakland, operated along settlement lines. She accepted a place on the council of the Associated Charities of Alameda County, and in 1901, when the secretary resigned, she took that position, giving up teaching. For seven years she retained that post, working with the conviction that this, at last, was her life's work only to wind up with the disillusioning conclusion that, no, this was not it either.

III

Anita assumed the secretaryship of the Alameda Charities a mature woman of 34, possessed of poise and a

quiet dignity, evolved and deepened during the eight years since she first saw Rivington Street, years of earnest if clumsy grappling with social problems and her own relation to them. Her sole training for the job consisted of the brief period on Rivington Street and the few years of association with the county charities council, but she brought to the work a tremendous energy and zeal. In the fulfillment of her duties, she discovered and developed a talent as an executive. More important, she learned how to fight; her quiet persistence and the heat of controlled anger were directed at red tape and apathy, at political corruption and particularly inhumane practices born of bureaucratic routine in the city and county governments.

A fellow social worker associated with her during those years, later wrote of her, "She worked long hours at \$85 a month, dyed her suits, economized on her luncheons, and gave more generously than she could afford from her own funds to alleviate distress that could not always be cared for through regular official channels. She was keen, intelligent, impatient of sham, fraud, deceit, or delay in action of public officials. . . ."

Anita, in comment on those years, has said, "I loved my people. I entered into human relationships I had not known before."

This comment is most revealing of her chief virtue as a charity worker. So genuine was her love for the people who came to her for help that she was able to enter into human relationships with them, not the mutually degrading relationship of the charity dispenser, condescending in her soul-saving piety, and the shamefaced, distressed recipient of the handout, so typical of such institutions.

Much of Anita's attention was devoted to juvenile delinquency; as a social worker, she was most interested in rehabilitation, and children, it seemed to her, were much more easily reclaimed than broken down adults, beaten by life and robbed of hope. In 1903, when juvenile courts were created by law in California, Anita became the first juvenile probation officer in Alameda County, serving without pay. Later, when a salary was attached to the job, it became a political plum and was given to someone more worthy of the gratitude of the political machine.

During her comparatively brief service as a probationary officer, Anita was instrumental in effecting some elementary reforms in the treatment of juvenile delinquents. The nature of her work in this respect is best illustrated by a single incident.

One day (1905 was the approximate year) she received a hurried call from the presiding judge of the juvenile court. The subject of the call was Isabel, 11-year old wayward child of an Emeryville race track employe, who for days wandered away from her home in the rear of a saloon on the edge of the race track. The mother, unable to cope with her spirited daughter, requested the judge to assume responsibility for Isabel's future, and the judge, in turn, wished to share the responsibility with Anita.

Given only 24 hours to investigate the case and arrive at a decision, Anita hurriedly went to work. She interviewed the parents and their neighbors, and then went to see Isabel. It was her first visit to the Alameda County jail, and she found it spotless, with the women inmates seated in a large comfortable living room (done away

with in the more modern jail constructed later). There was Isabel.

"Not so bad thought I, this group of quiet women, while little Isabel, anxious to talk, told me of her life at home, of her friends, the jockeys, of the zest of starting out not knowing whither, of the fun of sleeping in empty doorways, of begging dinner or breakfast," Anita recalled later.

Then Isabel, whose zest for life had seemingly not been dimmed by imprisonment, told her of the jail, and proudly pointed out her cell and her cell mate. The cell mate, with whom Isabel was locked up for 12 hours, was none other than a famous Emeryville prostitute whose pictures had filled the papers for days, illustrating the detailed stories of how she killed her paramour. In those days there were no special facilities for juvenile delinquents. They were tossed into jail with their elders, with prostitutes, drug addicts, with women suffering from sexual aberrations or social diseases. Anita was as indignant as she was shocked. Attempts to remedy the situation were blocked on all sides by red tape. Anita went to the Board of Supervisors and the District Attorney, demanding that the girl be removed from the jail and put in the county hospital for detention. Finally, her persistence, backed by threats to give the scandal the widest publicity, won from the chairman of the Board of Supervisors an agreement to place a room at the county hospital at the disposal of young Isabel. This room subsequently became the detention home for all juvenile delinquents until county funds were appropriated for a separate home with necessary attendants.

An equally scandalous situation arose in relation to

delinquent boys. For a while, Oakland police insisted on putting boys in jail, for there was a feud in progress between county and city officials, and the police said they could not take boys to the county hospital. Anita protested, but to no avail. Then one day, into her office stomped the Chief of Police, decked out in full regalia, gold braid and all, accompanied by an aide and a young, sullen boy arrested for some crime. The chief officiously explained that *he* would not take the boy to the county hospital, and hence was placing him in Anita's custody for transfer there. His formal speech concluded, the chief turned on his heels and, followed by his aide, stomped out of the office. The boy sat there stiffly, silent and sullen. He was a big overgrown chap and Anita, physically no match for him, was at a loss. Suppose he decided to walk out, what could she do? Anita glanced at him rather apprehensively, but there was no response; he just sat there immobile, his eyes fixed in a downward stare. Certainly his demeanor was not such as invited warmth, but Anita, obeying an impulse, sat beside him and placed her hand gently upon his. This slight gesture of affection had startling results.

The boy just crumpled down on the floor and let loose a stream of tears he could neither halt nor control. Anita let him cry, then placed a pillow under his head and gave him a handkerchief to dry his tears and wipe his nose. She washed his face with a damp cloth, and the boy who had seemed so sullen before was now docile and gentle. His ominous and rigid demeanor had been an attempt to conceal the fact that he was half scared to death by the stern pomp and gold braid of the police chief. A little

kindness, and this protective shell was broken, and our flooded all his pent up fear and emotion. . . .

IV

Not all of Anita's activity as a social worker was concerned with individual cases and isolated reforms. Toward the end of her tenure with the department a great natural cataclysm intervened, the San Francisco fire and earthquake of 1906. Case X and Case Y, careful entries in the ledger of social work, were brushed aside by the force of an elemental tragedy which had erupted from the very bowels of the earth and had swept thousands of people into its vortex. The magnitude and drama of the event have been recorded in virtually every art form and from almost every viewpoint. But Anita had no time to contemplate the event, to engage in those ponderous and empty moralisms which later depicted it as a retributive climax to San Francisco's sinful era. She had a more practical mission, to help provide for the homeless and the hungry.

The earthquake occurred on April 18, 1906. The following day, as the great fire reduced most of San Francisco to ashes, some 200,000 refugees streamed out of the hapless city in all directions. Some found a haven in Marin County, others trekked down the peninsula or into Alameda County. The mass exodus even overwhelmed the statisticians, and the available figures are conflicting, but the best guess is that there were 50,000 refugees in Oakland, of whom 36,000 were given daily rations by the organized relief forces.

Hinckle and McCann, in their history of Oakland (1852-1938) record that "sixty-three churches, as well as civic, fraternal and other organizations opened their doors to the people of San Francisco without discrimination as to class, condition, or creed. . . ."

Anita, however, served in the front lines. Immediately after the quake, she was called to San Francisco to organize the relief camp which pitched its tents in Golden Gate Park. For the first week after the fire, she remained at the camp, directing the feeding and housing of refugees. So immersed was she in these initial phases of the relief work that her memory retained no coherent picture of those days, and unfortunately, there is no historic data to throw into sharp relief her role in that work. She worked day and night, indefatigable, and in the face of the crisis, she found, as people frequently do, stores of latent energy and ability she had never known she possessed.

In her work, she was greatly aided by the labor unions, particularly in the later phases, when the first problems of food and shelter were superseded by those of rehabilitation and employment. Her liaison agent with the unions was a volunteer assistant, Christopher Ruess, who later became adult probation officer of Alameda County and now serves as senior probation officer in Los Angeles. She speaks highly of his devotion and energy at that time. The unions were very cooperative, particularly in the placement of the unemployed. Through the carmen's union, she found jobs for many refugees in the street railway system of Oakland which had to expand its service because of the sudden influx of population. Anita, then

a prohibitionist, was particularly delighted to find other places of employment for jobless bartenders.

For a brief period, the United States Army directed relief work. When the Army left, in Oakland, as elsewhere, a businessmen's committee was established to take over. This committee offered to double her salary of \$75 a month, but Anita refused, as she was at odds with the committee and felt that acceptance of the salary raise would place her under obligation to it, and give the businessmen a greater voice in formulation of relief policies. These businessmen, as is the wont of businessmen, approached the problems of relief in a businesslike manner. "Cut costs!" That was their motto, and they haggled with Anita over every case she presented to them. If she submitted an estimate of \$250 as the sum necessary for the rehabilitation of a certain individual and his family, they countered with an offer of \$125 and an implicit invitation to haggle. Anita refused to haggle. Instead, she threatened to turn the case over to Edward Devine, director of the Associated Charities in New York, who had been dispatched to San Francisco to direct the relief work, and this threat generally brought acquiescence, for the businessmen did not want Oakland stigmatized nationally as a community which could not take care of its own.

Her relations with the businessmen reached a crisis when one of the committeemen suggested that his daughter, a woman with no social service experience or training, be placed in charge of the relief work, with Anita as her subordinate. Anita indignantly handed in her resignation, but the chairman of the committee tore it up. By that time, he had become impressed with her

ability and sincerity, and her relief requisitions were granted without haggling over cut rates.

When the businessmen finally abdicated, they turned over the considerable amount of money and materials at their disposal to the Associated Charities, and in a final gracious gesture stipulated that Anita's salary be increased. Under those conditions she accepted.

V

Even before the earthquake and fire, Anita was beset by doubts as to whether what she was doing was of any fundamental value. She had begun to sense the futility of organized charity as a social institution. She had observed with her own eyes that with Biblical fertility two cases of delinquency grew where she had disposed of one. As a social worker in the early 1900's she had been primarily occupied with the declassed layer of society, trying to pull individuals out of the lower depths and perch them precariously again on the upper ledge from which they had slipped. But some other force, omnipotent and unseen, pushed people into the abyss at a much faster rate than she could pull them out with the social means at her command. She was trying to patch a decaying fabric. At first she was so concerned with each individual patch that she could not see the entire cloth. But then she became increasingly conscious that a different social fabric was needed, and not patches for the old one.

This mental process was interrupted by the fire and the duties it imposed upon her. For a year, she was too busy to think, but when the pressure of work eased, the

doubts returned. They were complex doubts, for she questioned herself as well as the nature of her work. Perhaps, she thought, the fault is with me. Perhaps, my own social vision is limited. Perhaps, sheer fatigue and slavishness to daily routine have dispirited me. She decided to ascertain where the fault lay, resigned her position and went east to work with more experienced social workers, people whom she had admired, like Devine of New York and Mary Richmond of Boston.

Her resignation occasioned deep regrets. A local paper wrote:

"Miss Whitney's resignation has been accepted with regret, in view of the comprehensive way she has filled a position at once so trying and important to society in all its elements. . . . She has maintained a high conduct of this clearing house for nearly all the philanthropic institutions of Oakland, and her resignation and withdrawal from this work, even at this ripe period of her useful career, causes those associated with her to realize to what a great extent they have come to depend upon her to act as mediator and adviser between the needy and the pillars of support of the community."

B. H. Pendleton, president of the Associated Charities, said:

"The directors of the organization cannot say too much in commendation of Miss Whitney's splendid services to this community in the difficult and important work she has carried unceasingly with so much success during the last six years. She has virtually been the head and soul of the Associated Charities. . . ."

VI

The New York charities proved a disappointment. The contrast between the immensity of the problems posed by poverty and the puny forces at the disposal of the charity institutions appalled her, as did political corruption, red tape and apathy. The very sight of New York's slums again impressed upon her the futility of coping with tuberculosis and other social diseases while the East Side remained as a huge incubus for these ailments.

She went on to Boston, which in those years had a reputation for a modern charities department. Lucy Stebbins who had been charities director for South Boston was leaving for a trip to Europe, and Anita was given the job.

Anita's last residence in New England had been at Wellesley. What a contrast! Beautiful Wellesley and South Boston, the slum rim of the Hub City, inhabited by immigrant Irish, where alcoholism and tuberculosis vied in a grim race of death, and sometimes joined for the final kill. While at school, she had visited Boston, its historic landmarks, Faneuil Hall and Bunker Hill, but never South Boston, that landmark of contemporary history. The beautiful Charles River which wound its way past Wellesley did not pass through South Boston; it graced the opposite end of town, widened to form the Back Bay and to provide a maritime view for Boston's Back Bay aristocracy. New England, which had connoted so much of the poetic joy of her youth, now crowned her growing disillusionment. South Boston finished her. Its squalor was more demonstrative, for alcoholism was more prevalent here than on New York's East Side or

Oakland's West Side. It was a raucous, profane slum; the shrieks of women, beaten by drunken husbands, were more frequent. The social sores and excrescence of poverty were more obvious. These phenomena were impressed upon her with greater strength for she had already begun to doubt her ability to cope with them through the instrumentality of social work.

"And so," she said later, "I became convinced that no real solution lay along the route of organized charities, and I definitely abandoned the profession that I had hoped was to be my life work, and I was left adrift again, with more questions to be answered. . . ."

CHAPTER FOUR

FROM SUFFRAGE TO SOCIALISM

I

The years 1911 to 1914, following her exit from social work, were for Anita a period of a transition. She was socially active in those years, but she did not link herself with anything fundamental, anything that had the continuity of the life's work she had abandoned when she quit organized charity. For a while she remained in comparative seclusion, sick at heart, disconsolate, then she became actively associated with the growing prohibition movement, a primitive reaction to the drunkenness of South Boston. But her energies and sense of social responsibility were fully aroused finally by the women's suffrage movement.

Now that women have had the vote in California for thirty years and throughout the nation for twenty, it is difficult to revive and again sense the missionary zeal with which the fight for women's suffrage was waged. As in many elementary democratic reform movements, arguments went to extremes; on the one hand, women's suffrage was painted as the ultimate in sin and chaos; on the

other, as the panacea for all the world's ills. The opponents of equal suffrage declaimed about the sanctity of the home and the beauty of motherhood, both of which they insisted would be forthwith destroyed if women mixed in politics and neglected the duties for which God and nature had designed them. Ironically enough, much of the money to finance the propaganda about the home and motherhood came from the saloon operators and the larger liquor interests who feared women's suffrage because it had been linked with the prohibition movement.

The movement for enfranchisement of women was of a mixed class character, based primarily upon the middle and working classes, with a sprinkling of upper class women. Such a mixed class composition naturally gave rise to a strange confusion of slogans, aptly illustrated in a manifesto issued by the Equal Suffrage Amendment League which urged the vote for women because:

1. "Women will advance in self-respect when no longer branded with the stigma of disenfranchisement. They will no longer hold themselves so cheap in marriage or out of it.
2. "Women, by payment of direct taxes on their property and indirect taxes on what they eat and wear, contribute to governmental revenues and should, because of their financial interest, be represented in every government.
3. "Women increase the nation's wealth by their industry, three-fourths of the married women doing their own house work, sewing, nursing, etc., and over 7,000,000 working outside their homes in remunerative pursuits.
4. "Women's ballots will hasten the golden era of equal pay for equal work.

5. "Women's ballots may bring greater attention to the sanitary needs of home, factory and street. . . .

6. "Women with the ballot could prevent destructive wars, injurious to the state and their own best beloved.

7. "Women are so generally chaste that even fraud, force, money, pretended love and the allurements of an idle, elegant life cannot tempt from virtue's path enough women to supply the demand. . . .

8. "Women who are slave mothers bring forth slave children. An enfranchised motherhood will bring forth a race which has never been equalled for nobility, heroism and true greatness.

9. "Women in California are as intelligent and virtuous and public spirited as are the women of Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, Finland, Norway, Isle of Man, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Washington, where women vote for all officers elected by the people.

10. "Women in California deserve the ballot as much as do the women of Kansas, England, Iceland, Scotland, Wales, Canada, Sweden, Denmark and Natal South Africa where women enjoy municipal suffrage."

II

When Anita actively entered the women's suffrage movement in 1911, it had developed a mass character and tremendous vitality. The peculiar sectarianism, which had plagued the earlier suffragettes, manifested either in a distorted portrayal of the Emancipated woman or a behaviour pattern based on the assumption that to attain equality with men one must imitate them, had largely

disappeared. This sectarianism, magnified and caricatured in hostile journals, was swept aside by the influx of masses of women, some of them with trade union experience, and by the growing political maturity of the movement, evolved in decades of political struggle.

Women's suffrage advocates were also helped by a progressive political atmosphere, then prevalent in California and developing throughout the country. America was on the threshold of the era of Wilsonian liberalism. In California, this era was ushered in by the state administration of Hiram Johnson who was elected governor in 1910. Typical of the times was the fact that the same ballot which submitted the women's suffrage issue to the electorate on October 10, 1911, also contained such progressive reform propositions as the initiative and referendum, the recall, authorization of a workmen's compensation law, subjection of judges of District Courts of Appeal to impeachment. Typical of the popular spirit was the fact that all these measures, among twenty-three on the ballot, were passed.

During the five months preceding the election, Anita served as state president of the College Equal Suffrage League, one of the most important of the many groups engaged in the campaign. The league, as is implied by its title, had originally been limited to college and professional women, but during the 1911 campaign it threw open its rolls to all women, regardless of education and social status, so long as they were willing to work for suffrage. This policy reflected the league's vigorous attitude toward the campaign, and, in turn, it helped add vigor to the organization. The league opened offices in

a downtown San Francisco building, established a publicity apparatus and speakers' bureau, streamlined its operations along modern political lines. In this respect, it was far ahead of other suffrage groups which clung to old leaders and old methods.

Among other organizations in the campaign were two of a decidedly working class character, the Women's Trades Union Label League, inspired by San Francisco labor leaders, and the Wage Earners League, an old organization which had been moribund and was revived to secure the "labor vote." It held its meetings at the San Francisco Labor Temple. There was also the Votes for Women Club, an organization of "self supporting women," including office employes and others not directly linked to the labor movement.

Despite the divergent organizations and classes represented, the campaign was marked by a high spirit of enthusiasm and unity. They had a realizable goal, and they were definitely united in their desire to achieve it. All other issues or points of possible difference were brushed aside. Only one thing mattered immediately—"Votes for Women." For Anita, working in such an atmosphere was a source of great joy. Like the others, she was simply swept away by the crusading zeal of the movement into an exaggerated appraisal of the prize to be won. She worked, as did others, day and night, and they did a tremendous job of propaganda.

According to Selina Solomons who later wrote the story of the campaign under the title, "How We Won the Vote in California," three million pages of printed matter was distributed in advocacy of suffrage. There were special leaflets by each of the organizations involved, appealing

to diverse sections of the population. A large number of John Stuart Mills' "Subjection of Women," one of the traditional propaganda tracts favoring women's suffrage, were gotten out. One of the most effective leaflets was titled "Opinions of Eminent Local Catholic Clergy." Father Gleason and other Catholic priests participated in suffrage rallies, and all the thirty-six Catholic congregations in San Francisco were canvassed several times by a large committee from the College Suffrage League. From the early morning mass at 6 a. m., until the later church gatherings, the suffragettes stood at the door, handing out their leaflets, and at the end of the campaign they boasted that they had reached every Catholic in the city.

The suffragettes enlisted the active support of such famous Californians as Luther Burbank, Frank Norris, Jack London, Joaquin Miller, David Starr Jordan and George Sterling, and such men as Henry George and Mark Twain, associated with California history.

"We challenge the 'antis' to mention one distinguished name that has come out of California who has not been a friend of equal rights," said one suffrage tract.

The "antis" did not accept that challenge, yet while their following may not have been "distinguished," it was both large and wealthy. The Los Angeles Times, traditional pillar of California toryism, was most hostile to equal suffrage, while The Oakland Tribune conducted a more subtle campaign of opposition. Incidentally, the ownership of The Tribune had that year passed into the hands of a woman, Mrs. Herminia Peralta Dargie.

An interesting and instructive tactic of the opposition played on the divergent class groupings in the suffrage movement in an attempt to set them at loggerheads.

Selina Solomons reported, for example, that a "Committee of 50," a dummy organization set up in Los Angeles, canvassed merchants and told them that "only the laboring women would vote" and hence "business would be hurt." "The working men, on the other hand," she added, "had been told that none but 'club women' would go to the polls, and, therefore, capitalistic interests would be promoted, to the disadvantage of the working man."

One of the most widely distributed opposition pamphlets quoted extensively from speeches by Senator Sanford and reached its graphic finale in a caricatured drawing of a suffragette atop a world in ruins, crying, "Didn't I raise hell!"

The campaign reached a hectic climax. There were six to seven meetings every night in San Francisco, as well as impromptu street rallies to catch the commuters at the Ferry Building. In Sacramento, a giant suffrage rally was held during the State Fair. In Los Angeles, at a July 4 celebration, when political speeches were banned in the parks, women chanted "Beloved California," with the refrain: "Hurrah! Hurrah! The vote will make us free!" Automobile tours to take the gospel of equal suffrage to the countryside were organized. Noon-day meetings were held at factory gates. On election eve, a windup rally at San Francisco's Dreamland Rink drew 8000 persons who jammed the huge arena.

On election day, the suffragettes, their hopes high, turned out in full organized force for there had been painstaking preparations for committees of watchers, tabulators and agitators who paced outside the 100-foot limit from the polling booths and buttonholed prospective voters. Even automobile transportation was provided for

friendly voters who otherwise might have found it difficult to get to the polls. The effectiveness of the suffrage election organization found two testimonials in the newspapers on the day after the elections. There was a photograph of laughing suffragettes, Anita Whitney among them, holding up a male voter at the corner of Grant avenue and Bush street. There was also a typically supercilious story which related that District Attorney Fickert voted early "but the political Dianas were on the job and popped away at him with their verbal darts of argument and persuasion enthusiastically and impartially, one asking him if he were sure he understood how to mark the ballot properly." If Fickert were as ignorant of election procedure as he was of the law, the question was not at all amiss.

Some of the suffragettes who were not too wearied by their arduous campaign stayed up for the election results. As the night wore on, their spirits sagged. Some wept. Precinct after precinct, reporting from Oakland and San Francisco, registered a negative vote, and past midnight the antis had such a formidable and ever-growing margin that suffrage seemed doomed.

"SUFFRAGE DEFEATED BY 5000." That was the headline in The Oakland Post which greeted Anita's weary eyes on the morning after election. It was a terrific letdown, and the suffragettes, their hearts laden with the bitterness of disappointment, their minds tortured by "might-have-beens," hoped against hope that somehow the later returns would turn the tide. But they did not have much confidence. One of their leaders issued a statement tantamount to an admission of defeat: "While the issue is still in doubt, the chances seem to be against

us at this hour. If we lose by less than 3000 votes on the face of the returns, it will mean that we really carried the election, as fully 3000 votes were illegally counted. This charge is based on reports made to us by precinct watchers who in many cases saw this done." Other suffrage leaders discussed plans for the next campaign. . . .

The early returns, coming mostly from the large cities, showed 82,296 votes against equal suffrage, 73,583 for, giving the antis a comfortable margin of 8,713 votes, with some 70 per cent of the vote counted. On October 12, two days after the election, things looked blacker yet, and The San Francisco Examiner carried a patronizing consolation editorial. On October 13, the unexpected happened and it was recorded in Examiner headlines: "SUFFRAGISTS WIN BY A NARROW MARGIN. At the 11th hour tide of votes turns defeat into victory."

The vote now stood at 119,830 for, 117,779 against, giving the amendment a majority of 2,051 votes, a narrow margin of victory which approximated the final count. The rural vote in the outlying counties had turned the tide, offsetting the edge given the antis by the large cities. In San Francisco, suffrage lost by 14,000 votes, failed to carry a single district although it made its best showing in the working class neighborhoods.

California thus became in suffragette parlance the sixth "free state," and the rejoicing of the suffrage leaders, some of whom had come from all parts of the United States and countries as distant as Australia and England to help in the campaign, their exhilaration after the sorrow of reconciliation to seemingly certain defeat, found crude expression in the triumphal note on which Selina Solomons concluded her account of the campaign: "Well

might the band have played 'Hail the Conquering Heroines Come' as they marched, a living proof of the poet's prophecy—of the woman's soul that leads on and upward."

III

Anita had every right to feel most deeply the joys of victory, for she had done much to bring it about. The organization which she headed was in some respects the most effective of those espousing votes for women, and she was one of its most effective leaders. Her singleness of purpose, her graciousness, her selfless zeal not only won admiration, but inspired others with that enthusiasm which was necessary for victory.

Selina Solomons described her as among the "ablest and most indefatigable workers" in the College Equal Suffrage League, "a young woman of the finest femininity, much personal magnetism and great executive ability."

Mrs. Genevieve Allen, a co-worker, later said: "As executive secretary of the California Equal Suffrage League, when Anita Whitney was president, I spent practically a year in close daily association with her. To my mind, she has been the kind of a person who would never sacrifice principle for expediency. She is a noble and wonderful woman, and I feel the feebleness of words when I try to express my admiration for her heart and mind and character."

Anita's personality and talent attracted nationwide attention and at the annual convention of the American Equal Suffrage Association, held in Louisville, Ky., shortly

after the California election, she was chosen second vice president of the organization, serving with such noted American women as Anna Howard Shaw, president, and Jane Addams, first vice president. She was delegated to organize suffrage work in Oregon, and in January, 1912, helped form the Oregon College Suffrage League, patterned after the California model. Her work here, too, was crowned with success, for after an active summer campaign, Oregon adopted women's suffrage in the November elections. Still later, she played a leading and active role in the campaign that brought Nevada into the fold of "free" states. To this day she cannot pass through Nevada without recalling that campaign, the trips to the mining camps and other outlying districts, the arduous journeys in a horse-drawn buggy to reach otherwise inaccessible camps. Everywhere she was greeted with friendly courtesy and the utmost chivalry by the miners.

IV

Suffrage won, the College Equal Suffrage League decided to reorganize itself on a permanent basis, and make the beneficent influence of women voters felt in California politics. The California Civic League was formed, with branches in many localities, and Anita served as president for the first two years and on the executive committee for several years thereafter. The league was a school in politics for hundreds and thousands of women, and Anita, through her leadership in the organization, helped make California's women a potent, conscious influence in the political life of the state. The league waged a successful fight for the inclusion of women on juries. It concerned

itself with restriction of red light districts, and the social welfare features of state governments. As president of the league, Anita engaged in extensive lobbying in Sacramento, and in one statewide political campaign to defeat the proposition on the 1914 ballot for repeal of the red light abatement law.

But Anita soon outgrew the comparatively limited scope of such activity. Imperceptibly at first she found herself drawn to the working class movement. The great and dramatic textile strikes at Lawrence and Paterson stirred her as the massacre of striking miners, their women and children, by Rockefeller-hired gunmen at Ludlow both shocked and angered her. She heard the first-hand stories of some of these momentous struggles from their organizers and leaders. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Arturo Giovannitti, Jim Larkin and other famous labor orators of the day came to California, and Anita heard them speak, and she was attracted by their vigor and fire and an assurance which came from close identification with the masses and their struggles. During her sojourn in Portland on behalf of the American Equal Suffrage Association she had heard Eugene V. Debs, then campaigning for the presidency, and she was most impressed by the natural ease with which he exchanged greetings with the crowd of admirers who flocked around him as he was leaving the meeting. Here again was a leader who did not speak solely for himself, did not just express inbred and incubated inner convictions, but on the contrary gained strength and stature because he expressed the hopes and inarticulate desires of millions.

The vitality of the working class movement evoked a deep and spontaneous response within her long before

she became even remotely conscious of the role of the working class in modern society. Her deep sense of justice, based on the literal acceptance of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights as a code of life instead of as a text for flamboyant July Fourth orations, hastened her identification with the working class. She resented almost as a personal affront, as a transgression on the Americanism which she regarded as a personal heritage, the persecution of the working class movement, particularly its most militant wing on the industrial front at that time, the Industrial Workers of the World.

She heard of the courageous "free speech" fight waged by the Wobblies in San Diego. In January, 1912, the San Diego authorities launched a series of attacks on Wobbly meetings, culminating in an ordinance outlawing free speech. The IWW fought back, and the ringing call for all "footloose Wobs" to converge on San Diego was carried up and down the coast via the freights and ships. Judging by the hysteria of the Merchants Association and the Chamber of Commerce, one might have thought that an army of thousands swarmed into San Diego, but actually only some 150 responded to the call.

Then occurred one of the most disgraceful episodes in California history. Hundreds of vigilantes, armed with guns, clubs and knives, staged a huge roundup of all persons suspected of Wobbly affiliation. The victims were marched to a suburb where they went through the ritual of kissing the American flag and singing The Star Spangled Banner to the accompaniment of the howls of the armed mob. Then they were herded into a cattle pen, slugged and beaten, and on their exit from the pen, one at a time, they were forced to run a gauntlet of clubs

and whips. One of the Wobblies subsequently died in jail while scores of others suffered serious injuries.

Anita could not remain complacent. Such incidents aroused in her an indignation which by its very force sought an outlet in action. Her chance for action came during the aftermath of the Wheatland Hop Riot which stirred all of California in 1913. Anita's influence on events set in motion by the Wheatland outbreak may have been minute, but the influence of those events upon her own development was of the first magnitude. It was her first direct contact with the class struggle, and it was an enlightening contact, for the Wheatland episode, like a flare dropped in pitch darkness, suddenly illuminated the elemental forces and motivations in the class struggle. The character of the spontaneous revolt of the hop pickers on the Durst ranch, near Wheatland, Calif., on August 3, 1913, was as primitive as Anita's understanding of the fundamental conflict which erupted in this explosive incident.

In Wheatland there was no middle ground. In Wheatland, class was pitched against class in naked combat with no rules of warfare except those that arose from the inexorable logic of the brief and savage conflict itself. In Wheatland, exploitation was undisguised. The 2800 men, women and children who had been lured to the hop ranch by Durst, the owner who later admitted he needed only 1500 workers, lived as best they could, some sleeping in the open fields, some on piles of straw, and some, the aristocrats, renting a tent from Durst at 75 cents a week. There were only nine outdoor toilets for 2800 people, and many of the 1500 women and children at the camp

vomited from the nauseating stench. Dysentery and diarrhea were rife; cases of malarial fever and typhoid were reported.

The workers entered the fields at 4 a. m., and by noon the mercury was at 106 and 110 degrees in the shade. Despite the insufferable heat, no water was brought to the workers. The reason: Jim Durst, a cousin of the ranch owner, peddled lemonade at a nickel a glass. From 200 to 300 children worked in the fields, for the miserable wage of 90 cents per hundred pounds could not provide for a family unless everyone pitched in.

Into such conditions were thrust workers of thirty nationalities, Puerto Ricans, Americans, Hindus, Japanese, Englishmen, unorganized except for a nucleus of 30 Wobblies. The Wobblies, some experienced organizers like Blackie Ford, went to work with great energy and considerable skill to weld this diversified group of backward workers into a solid body to fight for improved living conditions. Their preliminary efforts met with great success and within two days they were ready to break into the open and called a camp mass meeting. Some 2000 workers were in attendance. The meeting was drawing to a close when a posse, headed by the sheriff and the district attorney, who was also Durst's private lawyer, arrived on the scene. The sheriff and a few deputies started elbowing their way through the crowd to get at Ford who had been the speaker. The crowd was angry and one of the deputies on the fringe of the assembly fired a shot into the air "to sober the mob." That shot was like the retort of a starter's pistol in a race.

The fight was on. And in the general melee which ensued, the district attorney, a deputy sheriff, and two workers, a Puerto Rican and an Englishman, were killed, while scores were injured.

The posse fled from the scene. The hysteria was on. Governor Hiram Johnson dispatched four companies of the National Guard to Wheatland. Throughout the agricultural regions, a reign of unbridled vigilante terror was instituted against all those suspected of Wobbly sympathies. Gunmen furnished by the notorious Burns Detective Agency were deputized by county authorities. Arrests were made in every part of the state, and no one has ever been able to determine the actual number of persons jailed. Some were held incommunicado for weeks and months without trial and systematically tortured for "confessions."

Eight months after the Wheatland outbreak, Blackie Ford and Herman Suhr, another Wobbly who was not even at the scene of the riot, were convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. The authorities did not claim that the two had fired the fatal shots, or were in any way physically responsible for the deaths. Their guilt lay in attempting to organize the workers, and using allegedly violent language which, the authorities charged, was responsible for the killings.

The Ford-Suhr case was the first of California's celebrated labor cases, and Anita threw herself into the fight for their release. That was early in 1914 and there has not been an important case of labor persecution in California since in which Anita did not actively participate to defend labor's rights and those of the individuals victimized because of their adherence to the cause of labor.

Anita joined delegations of prominent liberals and labor leaders, including Paul Scharrenberg, then secretary of the California State Federation of Labor, and Mrs. Fremont Older in pleading with the governor for executive clemency. She spoke in behalf of the defense of Ford and Suhr. So high was the feeling engendered throughout the state by the expose of conditions on the Durst ranch, that Mrs. Durst, who had been a member of the California Civic League, Anita's organization, felt compelled to resign. But Ford and Suhr remained behind the bars. California justice had set its pattern.

V

It was during this period, early in 1914, that Anita joined the Socialist Party. It was a logical development, so logical that the exact date and manner of joining have long since faded from her memory. ". . . Imperceptibly and unconsciously," she later wrote, "I passed over the line, the invisible line, which divides mankind into two different groups, the group which stands for human exploitation and the group which stands for the fullness of life here and now, for human welfare. I was not sure how it was to come about, and I probably did a great deal of false sentimentalizing about it, but I had taken the road from which there is no returning and with whatever hesitations and stumblings I have tried ever since to follow."

For her there was no sudden conversion, no single dramatic incident which made her "see the light," no one brilliant argument or book. She evolved into Socialism, and while there must have been a revolutionary, "sudden,"

dialectic transition from bourgeois democratic liberalism to Socialism, the conditions for such a transition had reached such a ripe maturity within her that it was accomplished without any cataclysmic effects.

For her, there is an inner logic to her own evolution from childhood when she was pained and humiliated at the sight of stage-made poverty at the Capitol party for Irish famine relief to the time when as a mature woman of 47 she embraced socialism as the solution to poverty, as the answer to the inarticulate questions which had agitated her childhood. "I have trod a path," she is wont to say, and there is a path discernible, but few people are given to tread so straight a path, with such erect dignity. The two elements which shaped her social attitude toward life even in the Wellesley days, Christian ethics and the American democratic tradition, had not become diffused into the flabbiness of middle class comfort, nor smothered by the rationalizations which protectively envelop such comfort, just as some parasitic fungus sheathes a tree trunk. They remained hard and pure, and like a flint, when rubbed against the rock of reality—Rivington street, the Wheatland affair, the Alameda charities, the facts of politics as she saw them during her lobbying days—they generated the sparks which burst into that all-consuming, purifying flame of socialism.

As the Socialist Party was then constituted, it attracted many casual reformers, too many for the party's own good. But Anita's subsequent life demonstrates that the purely formal act of signing a party application was accompanied by deep inner conviction. She joined a party of Socialism, formally at least pledged to the teachings of Karl Marx, and affiliated to an international which still included

Lenin and Stalin, Liebknecht and Luxembourg. The process of differentiation then going on within the Socialist movement, heading for the inevitable split between the revolutionary elements and the social reformists, was to accelerate her own growth into a conscious revolutionary. History was still further to hasten that growth. She joined, remember, at the beginning of 1914. A few months later the World War was to break out. The stream of history was to become increasingly more turbulent. And Anita Whitney was plunged into that stream, now possessed of a Socialist consciousness to guide her.

CHAPTER FIVE

WAR AND AFTERMATH

I

The Socialist Party which Anita joined was not a very vital organization. It did spring to life during election campaigns and exhibited a growing power of attraction at the polls, but between elections it confined itself to vague and sporadic general agitation for Socialism. Everyday mass work, leadership of the struggles of the working class, be they in the form of strikes or extra-parliamentary political actions, were outside the scope of the party's life. It was content with the steady growth of its voting strength from a scattered 7,500 for a Social Democratic ticket in the 1900 state elections to 72,005 for Norman W. Pendleton, Socialist candidate for lieutenant governor in November, 1914. (Noble A. Richardson, gubernatorial candidate had trailed with 50,716 votes.) Reformist elements in the party envisioned such a continued and gradual growth of the Socialist vote until capitalism was submerged by the sheer weight of ballots. Those who were mathematically inclined might have reckoned that if from 1900 to 1914 the Socialist vote multiplied tenfold, then if it continued to grow in the same proportion, by

1928 a sun-kissed ballot box Socialism would have been won in California.

The dominant party leadership seemingly was undismayed by some very visible signs of the dangers inherent in the ballot box Socialism. In 1911, J. Stitt Wilson had been elected mayor of Berkeley on a Socialist ticket, but upon election he ignored the party and its counsels. Elsewhere, too, Socialists had been elected to local posts, but beyond effecting some minor reforms, they achieved little, because the policy of using their public office to rally the masses in an effective struggle for their demands was unknown to them.

The most potent single Socialist institution was *The World*, a weekly paper published by the central Oakland Local, but circulated throughout the state. The paper was edited by J. E. Snyder, a Nebraskan with many years of experience on the labor press and a progressive militant outlook. *The World* had struggled along since 1905, but it was destined to play its most important role in the war and post-war years when its independent policy in relation to such major events as the Mooney case and the Russian revolution was to influence in large measure the course of the Socialist movement in California.

Anita has the most desultory recollections of her first years in the party, some distribution of campaign literature and attendance at meetings. "I can never remember that we had any real work to do," she says. "Being a Socialist didn't amount to much in those days." For the first year in the party, she was a member of the San Francisco local. Then she transferred to Oakland where her activities were to be centered for more than a decade.

The outbreak of the World War and the increasing

American preparations for entrance into the conflict shattered the idyllic from-election-to-election existence of the Socialist Party. The impact of the war and the issues it posed before the Socialist movement accelerated the conflicting currents within the party, delineated more sharply the division between the moderate reformists and those with militant revolutionary tendencies. An initial crisis arose around the Mooney case.

When Mooney and his associates were arrested after the Preparedness Day bombing in 1916, the official Socialist Party state leadership refused to intercede in their behalf. The World, however, defying the pressure of the party's state leaders, actively entered the campaign, and became the initial rallying center for the Mooney defense movement. It was The World which first exposed the frameup character of the case against Mooney, Warren K. Billings and the others. Snyder made the Mooney case the central campaign of the paper, and his judgment was validated by a doubling of circulation from some 7,000 to 15,000. The World provided wide agitational support to the first Mooney defense committee organized by Robert Minor.

Anita also was among the first to enlist in the fight for Mooney. She helped raise funds for the defense and during Billings' trial assisted in the issuance of a pamphlet exposing the corrupt jury system in San Francisco County whereby a class of professional jurors had come into existence, most of them with close ties to the district attorney's office. Under the prevailing jury system it was possible for the prosecutor to select jurors to his own taste for a major case, for the panel from which they were to be drawn was so stacked.

The alignments in the Socialist Party around the Mooney case had their origin in the more fundamental division over the war. The militants took an anti-war position, fought against the preparedness propaganda, and regarded Mooney as a victim of the war hysteria, and the case against him as an attempt to intimidate the opposition to American involvement in the imperialist conflict. The reformists, on the other hand, either gave their tacit approval to the pro-war campaign or remained passive in the face of it. They, therefore, were either complacent or actively hostile toward Mooney.

Anita was identified with the militant wing for she was actively opposed to the war and American involvement. She was a militant pacifist, her attitude somewhat akin to that of Debs, but not quite as advanced. Since there was very little clarity in the party on the nature of the struggle against imperialist war, militant pacifism at that time represented a comparatively advanced, and certainly a courageous position, even though in general pacifism is at best but an ineffectual weapon in opposing a reactionary war, and as a principle becomes pernicious and reactionary in a period when men fight and die for the advancement of human liberty and progress. To the best of her own recollection, on the very day of the fateful Preparedness Parade in San Francisco, Anita was attending a peace rally in Oakland, held to counter the jingoistic pro-war agitation.

Her efforts in behalf of peace were largely registered through non-party channels. The anti-Preparedness Day rally she attended, for example, was organized by the Union Against Militarism, a pacifist organization which mushroomed into existence in 1916 and faded from the

scene almost as quickly as it arose. The union was an energetic organization with a flare for publicity. It trailed President Wilson on his preparedness tour through the middle west and everywhere its meetings attracted larger crowds than did the President. But it did not have the substance to keep its head above the rising tide of war hysteria and it went under. During the period of its brief and brilliant existence, Anita served on its California committee.

After American entrance into war, the People's Council sprang into existence with branches throughout the country and headquarters in Chicago. Anita helped form a branch of the council in San Francisco and served as treasurer as long as the branch survived. The council fought for repeal of the conscription law and conducted general propaganda against the war, with the heaviest emphasis on a pacifist expose of the horror of it all, and a secondary theme dwelling on the imperialist character of the struggle.

II

During the war and after, Anita developed close associations with other mass movements, two of which were indicative of what was to become a lifelong concern with the rights of minority peoples. It was certainly a tribute to her reputation as a champion of the oppressed that both the Negro and Irish movements sought her out and invited her to join them as a leader although she was neither Negro nor Irish. When a National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's branch was formed in the Bay Area before the war, she accepted an invitation to join its executive committee and maintained

that membership for more than fifteen years, long after other whites had been dropped.

In the spring of 1919, Kathleen O'Brennan, a brilliant Irish woman who has since returned to Ireland, organized a group of Irish women in San Francisco into the American Irish Educational League. Anita was invited to become chairman of the organization and she accepted, expecting, as she later wrote, "to keep the chairmanship only a limited time until some woman in whose veins flowed Irish blood could be found who had time to carry it on." The league's avowed purpose was "to tell the truth about Ireland" and its membership was open to all women who believed that President Wilson's promise of "self-determination for small nations" also included Ireland.

"The league," Anita wrote later, "seemed to have sprung into existence at just the right moment, and the fact that it was quite independent of any of the older Irish organizations that flourished in San Francisco, and that its sole aim was the movement for national freedom, quite distinct from any religious or political affiliations, brought us phenomenal success. We began our meetings in the parlors of the St. Francis Hotel, then moved into the Italian room, then into the ballroom, and finally staged some meetings that crowded Dreamland Rink."

III

While Anita was preoccupied with these movements, within the Socialist Party the schism grew ever deeper as history itself posed problem after problem demanding a definite attitude and the sum total of these attitudes became crystallized into two increasingly hostile viewpoints, that of the left and right wings. Coincident with

American entrance into the war in April, 1917, an emergency convention of the Socialist Party was held at St. Louis. This convention adopted a resolution formally opposing American entrance into the war, but it was so confused, vague and contradictory that it failed to give any lead to the masses or any guidance to the Socialist Party itself. Rudderless, the Socialist Party drifted, and the contradictory trends which the St. Louis resolution attempted to reconcile or gloss over waged a bitter struggle over the Socialist attitude toward the war.

Essentially, their differences divided those who, despite vacillation and confusion, desired to conduct a revolutionary struggle against imperialism and its war, and those who shrank from such a struggle and hence buttressed the system of imperialism regardless of their protestations. The combatants themselves, however, could not assay their own roles, could not clearly define these differences which had divided them.

It required the Russian Revolution of November, 1917, to throw into sharp focus the nature of the different trends within the American Socialist movement, to provide a mirror in which the exponents of these trends could finally recognize their own features. Prior to the Bolshevik advent to power, California Socialists, with few exceptions, and those consisting almost entirely of immigrant workmen, had never heard of Lenin, let alone any of his writings. After the revolution, they received fragmentary snatches of Leninist ideas. Such concepts as "dictatorship of the proletariat" and "revolutionary mass action" became the touchstones of ideological clashes between left and right.

Anita personally responded to the revolution with the

greatest enthusiasm. Here, at last, were Socialists who *did* things, who had the courage and boldness to take power, to cut through the timidity of reformism and use that power to construct the Socialist order. That was her instantaneous response, and it was spontaneous, almost instinctive. She has since said wryly, "Sometimes I wonder how I could have been so enthusiastic—I knew so little." But the knowledge which she avidly sought served to confirm and heighten her initial enthusiasm. The sheer sweep and magnitude of the event, reported in the Socialist press by John Reed, Albert Rhys Williams and others, fired her imagination. The bold, firm, concise logic of Lenin's pronouncements, as contrasted with the mawkish flounderings of his opponents, shook her with their strength.

She became, ideologically, an adherent of the left wing, a partisan of the Russian Revolution. Like Eugene V. Debs she might have exclaimed: "I am a Bolshevik from the crown of my head to the tip of my toes."

Anita was no longer a reformist. Her first break with reformism was marked by her renunciation of charity work, that most primitive expression of reformism. Her second break was marked by entrance into the Socialist Party. Unlike others with a reformist past, who entered the party to foist their reformist ideas upon it, Anita joined the party because she wanted to break with that past, because she had become conscious of the need for a revolutionary transformation of society. Her final and irrevocable break with reformism came with the Russian Revolution and her adherence to the Left Wing.

In California, the Left Wing enjoyed a decisive majority following among Socialist Party members. This was dem-

onstrated in the election of delegates to the national party convention, summoned to meet in Chicago at the end of August, 1919, after insistent demands from the rank and file that a convention be held. The election was a landslide victory for the Left Wing. Even more important, the votes seemed to have been cast in direct proportion to the clarity and lack of equivocation by the nominees in support of the Left Wing program. Max Bedacht, then a leader in the German Socialist Federation, a member of the AFL Barbers Union in San Francisco, and an ardent spokesman for the Left Wing, led the ticket with 685 votes, while Cameron King, the most prominent Right Winger, mustered a bare 208 votes.

IV

The delegates returned from Chicago with strange tales and a new affiliation, the Communist Labor Party, which they urged upon the Socialists of California.

John C. Taylor, the inveterate story teller of the delegation, related that when he arrived at the Socialist convention building in Chicago he was mildly surprised by the large contingent of police and the Black Maria at the entrance. Pushing his way through, he headed up the stairs, but at the landing on which the convention hall was located several policemen blocked the way.

"Where is your pass?" a policeman demanded.

"Here are my credentials," Taylor replied, holding out the duly certified credentials from the California organization.

"Naw, dat's no good," the policeman shook his head. "You gotta have a pass to git in here. Gwan, go to your office and git yourself a white pass."

Angered both at the sight of uniformed policemen acting as sergeants-at-arms for what was supposed to be a Socialist convention and at his exclusion, Taylor went to the national office. He demanded an explanation of Adolph Germer, then the national secretary. Germer replied, "The California delegation is challenged." It turned out that Cameron King had written a letter contesting the election and this provided the formal pretext for excluding the California delegates. That this was only a formal pretext was proven by the fact that most of the Left Wing delegates were excluded.

Taylor returned to the convention building and while wandering around stumbled by accident upon an entrance through a back alley which led into the convention hall. Excited at his discovery, he rounded up sixteen Left Wing delegates and guided them into the convention hall. The sessions had not yet begun, and the Left Wingers seated themselves in the empty chairs. Suddenly, Germer entered. He was a big man, towering above six feet in height and well over 200 pounds in weight. At first he was amazed. Then with that domineering and impressive air, bolstered by his physical massiveness, which was typical of him he turned on the seated Left Wingers.

"I'll ask you to leave this hall," he boomed.

There was silence.

"I'll ask you *in a comradely way* to clear the hall," he persisted, his voice getting louder.

"In the same *comradely way*, I'll tell you to go to hell," Taylor finally replied.

"Officers! Clear the hall!" Germer screamed.

From the wings and backstage, from side doors and back doors, policemen came swarming in. The delegates

spontaneously decided on passive resistance and refused to budge. The policemen lifted them bodily, sometimes with their chairs, and tossed them out of the hall.

Excluded in this manner from the Socialist convention, the California delegates joined with other Left Wingers in a convention which founded the Communist Labor Party, one of the halves which was later to be joined in what is known today as the Communist Party of the United States.

Returning to California, the delegates met with great success in winning the Socialist membership for the newly formed Communist Labor Party. By overwhelming votes, local after local changed its affiliation. The last and most important to act was Local Oakland, largest in the party and the most influential, much of its influence derived from its control of *The World*. Historic documents of action have a cryptic ring and the minutes of that eventful meeting of the Oakland local, still preserved in the original pencilled scrawl of J. G. Reed, the organizer, read:

"Minutes of Local Oakland, Oct. 20, 1919.

"Meeting called to order by Org. Com. Reed. Comrade Tobey elected chairman. Minutes read and accepted. Order of day called for. Motion made and seconded that we postpone admission of members till next week, carried.

"Moved and seconded: That Local Oakland sever its connections with the Socialist Party of America and that the charter be returned, carried.

"Motion made and seconded: That we join the Communist Labor Party. Carried.

"Motion made and seconded: That we appropriate 15 dollars for telegrams stating the action of Local Oakland tonight, carried.

"Moved and seconded: That the present party officers be retained. Carried.

"Adjourned 12:15.

"J. G. Reed, secretary."

The only hint of the travail of transition is the late hour of adjournment, past midnight. Actually there was a stormy session in which a small but vocal minority bitterly opposed the change in affiliation. The vote was about eight to one for adherence to the Communist Labor Party, and Anita's was among the votes cast for this transfer. The World went with the local and thereafter became the organ of Local Oakland, Communist Labor Party.

On the initiative of the San Francisco local, a call was issued for the first Communist Labor Party state convention to meet at Loring Hall, Oakland, on the morning of Sunday, November 9, 1919. Each local was entitled to one delegate, with one additional delegate for every twenty-five members or major fraction thereof.

When the convention was called to order by John C. Taylor, there were some 145 delegates in attendance, representing every local throughout the state which had affiliated to the newborn party. C. A. Tobey, for many years a member of the AFL Sign Painters Union in Oakland, was elected chairman, while Taylor was chosen secretary. Among the active participants in the convention were Max Bedacht who had been elected to the national executive committee of the Communist Labor Party at Chicago and reported on the differences which had led to the split in the Socialist movement, Kaspar Bauer who reported for the resolutions committee, James H. Dolsen who headed the committee which framed the constitution. Anita also took an active part, serving on both the creden-

tials and resolutions committee. The delegates labored from ten in the morning until ten at night, and, according to Taylor's boast in the official report, "that which was accomplished takes the usual convention three days to put down on paper." Most of the time was consumed in ratification of the constitution and a heated debate over one resolution submitted by the resolutions committee on political action. The controversial resolution, it was feared by some of the delegates, represented a throwback to the pure parliamentarism of the Socialist Party, and they succeeded in substituting for it the more comprehensive statement on political action which had been adopted at the national Communist Labor Party convention. Other resolutions denounced the "undeclared war against Soviet Russia" then waged by the Wilson Administration, demanded withdrawal of American troops from Russia, Mexico, Haiti and Santo Domingo, endorsed industrial unionism, urged agitation and work for the release of "political and class war prisoners," and complimented the workers for their support of the Plumb plan for government ownership and operation of the railroads, but pointed out that ultimate solution of "the labor problem" lay in collective ownership of all the means of production.

The convention also proclaimed The World as the party's official statewide organ, and elected a state executive committee on which Anita Whitney was chosen to serve as alternate.

V

The birth of the new party was attended by great social convulsions. It was 1919, one of those years that somehow remains imprinted on man's memory, long after its

specific significance is forgotten, leaving that paradoxical feeling of foreboding after the event. It was 1919. Year of the Versailles Treaty. Year of the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg, year of the Hungarian revolution, of great social upheavals in Germany and Austria. Terrible year of civil war in Soviet Russia when on half a dozen occasions the defeat of the young Soviet regime was heralded throughout the world. Year of the Black Sea revolt in the French fleet, of the glorious sympathy strikes by British and American longshoremen who refused to load the munitions destined against the Red Army. It was an angry, tempestuous, gloomy year when despair and bitterness mingled with high and exhilarating, short-lived hopes.

In America, this year of post war upheaval was marked by a great strike wave, meeting head-on a savage open shop assault of the employers waged under the banner of the "American Plan." The year was ushered in by the Seattle General Strike of February 6, the first effective general strike in the country's history. It was ushered out by bitterly contested strikes at the opposite end of the country in the men's clothing industry of New York and the textile mills of New England. In between, 365,000 men walked out of the steel mills, under the leadership of William Z. Foster; a half-million miners left the coal pits in November; thousands struck in scores of other industries. In one issue of *The World*, the headline shouted: "ONE MILLION STRIKERS IN U. S. TODAY."

The workers of the Bay Region were caught up by this strike wave. Forty thousand metal trades workers

tied up the shipyards and the uptown shops. Longshoremen, tailors, traction workers in Oakland, even the telephone girls walked out that year. At one time, 60,000 workers were on strike in the Bay Area.

It was into such a world that the foundling Communist Labor Party, inexperienced and terribly naive in many respects, was thrust. History pays no deference to youth, and it did not spare the party. With the discernment of class intuition, the employers recognized in the seemingly weak infant their potentially most formidable foe and with all the violence at their command, legal and extra-legal, they attempted to crush it.

VI

In California, as elsewhere throughout the country, the press and other propaganda agencies of the employers had worked up a pitch of anti-red hysteria which provided the atmosphere for acts of violence.

In January, the newly-elected legislature had convened. William D. Stephens, a Hiram Johnson progressive, was governor. Having served out Johnson's last two years as governor, he was elected in his own right in November, 1918. One of his opponents in the election was Charles M. Fickert, district attorney who helped engineer the Mooney frameup. The campaign reached its peak during the last months of the World War, and Fickert stumped the state, working himself into a frenzy over the red menace, and presenting himself in hysterical tones as the sacrificial hero who was ready to lay down his life to save the women of California from revolution. Not only was Fickert trounced in the gubernatorial elections of 1918,

but when he stood for reelection as San Francisco district attorney the following year, he was defeated by Matthew Brady.

Despite this twice-expressed mandate against the red hysteria, Governor Stephens, in keeping with the Johnson progressive tradition, coyly yielded to it. As the legislature convened, the atmosphere in Sacramento was colored by a trial then in progress of a group of IWW members, rounded up by Federal agents and accused of violating the Espionage Act. Lurid tales of sabotage and violence, told at the trial by paid informers, were plastered over the front pages of the newspapers and provided favorite topics of conversation among the legislators who were puffed up with their own importance as guardians of the home, motherhood, religion and other cliches of the professional politician.

The legislature saw red, all right. With the roar of a bull, Assemblyman W. A. Doran, a rancher from San Diego county, offered a bill to outlaw the color red, to make it a crime to display a red flag in any manner or form. The lawmakers pondered this proposed statute with proper legislative dignity and decided against it. What would the auctioneers do if deprived of the traditional colors of their craft? What would the railroads do? You just can't outlaw a color which has become part of the customs and habits of a people.

While Doran's folly was thrown out, the smart money in the state was behind a bill which passed. This bill was hatched in a conference between Raymond Benjamin, chairman of the State Republican Central Committee and commonly regarded as the power behind the governor,

and Max Kuhl, a shrewd San Francisco lawyer who represented the Industrial Association. Benjamin who was also Assistant Attorney General drafted the criminal syndicalism law and handed it, ready made, to Senator William Kehoe of Eureka to drop into the legislative hopper. Kehoe went through the motions like an automaton. He was in the uncomfortable position of having to pretend to be the father of a child which was not really his. Finally, when pressed, he frankly confessed he could not explain the vague provisions of the bill, and bore no responsibility for them. All he knew, said Kehoe, was that the administration wanted it passed. Then it was commonly supposed that Attorney General U. S. Webb had written the bill, but when he was questioned, he professed even greater ignorance than did Kehoe. It was one of those strange spectacles so common to legislative bodies. No one knew exactly where the bill came from. Yet everyone was given the understanding that it came with a must-pass tag. Chamber of Commerce lobbyists buttonholed legislators, whispered the magic words in their ears. The newspapers blossomed forth with fervent editorials urging passage of the bill. It was presented as an emergency measure, with the immediate preservation of public peace and safety dependent upon its passage. So great was the pressure that only eight votes were cast against the bill in the assembly and none at all in the senate.

The eight dissenters waged a courageous fight. Assemblywoman Grace Dorris of Bakersfield said on the assembly floor: "In 1638 my ancestors came to America in order that they might have the right to believe as they chose. After three centuries there still lives in me that same belief in freedom of speech and thought. . . . I do

not believe in destruction or violence of any kind. But neither do I believe that we can rid ourselves of the menace of sabotage by a return to the methods that drove our ancestors from their homes into the wilderness of an unknown land. I believe the only cure for IWWism is a removal of the cause of IWWism. When we have done away with oppression there will be no need of suppression. When we have industrial democracy as well as political democracy, IWWism will vanish as the dew before the morning sun."

Assemblyman Edgar Hurley of Oakland said: "Inasmuch as I have been unable to find out just who actually drew up the bill, I am extremely skeptical about it. I consider that the language of the bill is ambiguous and indefinite, and that the terms of the bill are not sufficiently defined."

The IWW was the chief bogey used to secure passage of the bill, and at first its provisions were used almost exclusively against the IWW. Emanuel Levin, then director of the People's Institute, a working class cultural center in San Francisco, was the first arrested under the law, but he was not convicted. James McHugo, IWW secretary in Oakland, was tried and convicted. Dozens of IWW members were railroaded to jail under terms of the law.

VII

The Loring Hall convention of the Communist Labor Party had been held on Sunday, November 9. On the following day, an ominous note crept into the story of the convention which appeared in *The Oakland Enquirer*:

"The American flag," said the story, "hung in one corner of the room in an antique cabinet and over it was a naval service flag with one star. But, during the noon hour, a huge red cloth was hung over the case so that the American flag was no longer visible while the radicals prepared to adopt their un-American constitution."

Tuesday, November 11, was the first anniversary of the Armistice. After midnight, a mob, said to have consisted of American Legionnaires, raided Loring Hall which served as party headquarters, wrecked it, threw books into the street and set fire to them. In all, the damage amounted to \$2000, mostly in books and furnishings.

The Enquirer of November 12 reported the raid with hardly restrained glee:

"In retaliation for alleged anarchistic and Bolshevistic remarks at a recent meeting, coupled with a display of the red flag and anti-American sentiments, 400 members of the American Legion and loyal sympathizers raided the headquarters of the Communist Labor Party at Loring Hall, Eleventh and Clay streets, shortly after midnight this morning and completely demolished the place.

"A police riot call was turned in and several carloads of officers rushed to the scene, but so well had the raid been planned, with almost military precision, that not a single one of the raiders was in sight five minutes after the fire was started.

"The raid was planned, former service men state, because they had confirmed reports that the Communists had shrouded the American colors in red flags and had made speeches in favor of transforming the American government into a soviet.

"Last evening it was decided that the alleged Bolsheviks must be taught a lesson, and the word was passed at the Auditorium where a dance was in progress, that a raid was impending. Leaving their girl partners, and gathering comrades from all sides, the men collected by twos and threes in front of the hall, and just after midnight, with a shout, broke down the doors.

"Furniture, banners, charters of German lodges, insignia of fraternal rank, pictures of Russian leaders, and other junk was hurled from the windows into the street, and while wondering householders nearby gazed on with astonishment, the torch was applied."

The Enquirer, in its zeal, even referred to the insignia of the German fraternal lodges as "Hun emblems."

Actually, leaders of the party, as well as striking metal trades workers had been tipped off that a plan was afoot not only to wreck Loring Hall, but the Labor Temple as well. At 8:30 p.m., November 11, two party representatives went to the police, told them of the warnings they had received, and asked police protection for the hall. At 10:30 p.m., a committee of metal trades strikers, chosen at a strike meeting then in progress, also visited police headquarters with a similar plea. Police protection was promised. None came.

An account by Anita, published seven years later, picks up the story from there as follows: "As the police did not respond, members of the Metal Trades and the Boilermakers offered to serve as guard. These sturdy sons of toil looked entirely too sturdy to the members of the American Legion when they first came to Loring Hall so they disappeared to return later when our guardians had left. The ex-servicemen then proceeded to wreck

the hall and they did the job thoroughly. The janitor was locked in an upper room, desks were smashed open; books and pamphlets piled in the streets, topped by our typewriters, and fire set to the pile. And the police, who had promised protection, remained in their headquarters three blocks away and did not get to the scene until it was too late to identify anyone."

Luckily, the Legionnaires were sufficiently discreet to wait until the hall's guardians had departed or some serious bloodshed might have resulted. On the very same day, armed Legionnaires attempted to raid the IWW hall at Centralia, Wash. The IWW members in the hall defended themselves with gun in hand and four Legionnaires were shot dead. Wesley Everest, an IWW and ex-serviceman, was seized by the Legion mob and brutally lynched. Eight other IWW members were subsequently arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to life terms in the penitentiary. A similar tragedy could have very easily ensued in Oakland.

But the newspapers blithely and approvingly reported on November 12 that "members of the American Legion have taken up the cudgels against any complacency on the part of the city government toward radical strongholds alleged to exist here." On November 13, Police Commissioner J. F. Morse, grieved at the intimation of complacency, blustered: "The time has come for Oakland to realize that it must prepare to meet radicalism face to face." Morse announced the immediate formation of a "police loyalty bureau" under the direction of Detective Fenton Thompson, a former U. S. Deputy Marshal in Texas and a Department of Justice agent during the war

years in San Diego and Los Angeles, who had been acting as a one-man red squad.

This did not satisfy the newspapers. They wanted blood. They demanded to know how it was possible for such a meeting as the Communist Labor Party convention to be held in Oakland without any interference by the authorities. Thompson explained apologetically that he had taken his regular day off on Sunday, but had notified Police Chief J. Frank Lynch and District Attorney Ezra Decoto of the meeting and, according to *The Oakland Tribune*, he even asked Decoto whether he should arrest all the delegates. "Go carefully, I don't want to clog the calendar," was Decoto's reply according to *The Tribune* story. Now, Decoto denied any such statement, explaining: "I gave no instructions to Fenton Thompson that he was or was not to raid the meetings of the Communists. It is not my business to police the city."

All this flurry occurred on Wednesday, November 13. On the same day, a delegation of "citizens" called on Morse, demanded to know what he was going to do about the radical menace. On the next day, newspapers announced that "Oakland vigilantes will curb Reds if police fail."

On November 15, the Oakland city council rose to the occasion and ordered the police to "exterminate anarchy" in Oakland. The American Legion offered to recruit 1000 men to help in the extermination. The council passed a stringent ordinance, prohibiting any sort of public meeting without a police permit. Demands were voiced in the council for suppression of *The World* on the grounds it had criticized President Wilson and had published "a lot of Russian news." While the council stopped

short of such action, publishers of *The World* had received threats for two successive weeks, warning them to cease publication or have their premises and print shop smashed. They continued publication. "Then came threats of tar and feathers and the police came and 'kindly' informed the editor that he was being arrested to protect him from the mob. P. B. Cowdery (the business manager) was lured by a phone call to the jail to 'see Snyder' and was arrested, both being charged with issuing *The World*, etc.," *The World* reported in its December 19 issue.

Arrests came in quick succession, and within two weeks after the Loring Hall convention, those arrested and charged with criminal syndicalism included James H. Dolson, J. G. Weiler, J. C. Taylor, Edric B. Smith, C. A. Tobey, Max Bedacht, J. E. Snyder, P. B. Cowdery, J. G. Reed, J. A. Ragsdale and Alanson Sessions. Of all those jailed, only Sessions, who later was to become a leader of the Progressive Party, cracked. He, reportedly through intervention of his family, pleaded guilty and was let off with probation. The others were released on \$5000 bail each, pending trial.

The newspaper hysteria was now directed against them. The so-called "red flag" incident at the convention, involving the alleged draping of the show case which contained an American flag with a red cloth, was used to inflame the public sentiment.

Almost simultaneously, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer ordered his notorious nation-wide red raids. The extent of the terror can be gauged from Palmer's own boastful testimony before a House Appropriations Committee that "in the latter part of January, 1920, our field

reports indicate that 52 per cent of our work (the work of the Department of Justice—A.R.) in the country was in connection with the so-called radical movement." From July, 1919, to January 1, 1921, according to Palmer's own figures, 4138 alleged aliens were arrested. On November 14, 1919, Palmer announced he had the records of a list of 60,000 persons, both citizens and aliens, who were under investigation by the Department of Justice.

Such was the initiation of the organized Communist movement into the political life of the country. No political party in American history has ever faced such terror and repression at its birth, and it is doubtful whether any other party could have survived such a baptism. But what the Communist movement lacked in experience and maturity, it made up in tenacity and courage, and its elementary grasp of the scientific social theory on which it was founded. Despite the terror, the Communist movement took root, it survived and ultimately grew. . . .

CHAPTER SIX

THE CASE OF ANITA WHITNEY

I

Against the background of 1919, its tumult and panic, Anita Whitney stepped forward as the central character in a drama that was to drag on for seven years, from climax to climax, a stubborn reminder of the things that were in the post-war period. If she were given to forebodings of danger, there were certainly enough portents to put her on guard; the passage of the criminal syndicalism law, the raid on Loring Hall, the arrest of her comrades. She, as a member of the Communist Labor Party state committee and as an active and effective foe of the terror regime, was a logical target for the vengeance of the authorities. But she went about her work, speaking to diverse groups, maintaining the mass contact she had established in 20 years of public life. Then the authorities struck.

II

On the day after Thanksgiving, on Friday afternoon, November 28, 1919, some 150 women gathered in the Hotel Oakland in a state of great excitement. They were

"middle" women, of middle class and middle age, respectable wives of attorneys, doctors, public officials and university professors. Some were teachers or social workers or followers of some other career open to the independent daughters of the middle class. They all came under that generalized and comfortable designation of "club women," and they had come together as members of their club, the Oakland Center of the California Civic League, recognized as the largest and most solid of the women's clubs in Oakland. Under ordinary circumstances the buzz of conversation on such a day would have centered on the Thanksgiving dinners of the day before, on uninspired comments about overeating and methods of relief from its effects; those who could forget the day-old past and fix their minds on the future might have talked of the coming Christmas holidays, the terribly high prices and hard times. But no ordinary circumstances attended this gathering.

Some of the women had recognized in the hotel lobby the figures of Police Inspector Thompson and Frank Goslin, chief Department of Justice operative in Oakland, flanked by two burly deputies. It was not customary for meetings of the Oakland Center to come under surveillance of the law's most jaundiced eyes. But this was no customary meeting. Anita Whitney was scheduled to speak.

For two weeks now, Anita's scheduled appearance had been a public issue, a source of agitation and dissension among the club members. She had been the first target of the police authorities when the city council granted them the power to censor all public meetings. Immediately after the passage of the anti-free speech or-

dinance Police Chief J. F. Lynch compelled an Oakland Mother's Club to cancel a lecture by Anita on "Women in Legislation." On the heels of that ban, the Oakland Center dared invite Anita Whitney to speak! The "League of Americans," a bogus patriotic organization which had mushroomed into existence, issued an inflammatory statement to the press, pleading in the name of Americanism and the war dead that Anita be silenced. All the passions of the day now swirled about the Oakland Center, and the club women, most of whom had known Anita for many years and admired her, resisted all this pressure and despite formal notice from the police that Miss Whitney must not speak stood by their invitation. In the face of all the hysterical tirades leveled against them, the club leaders would not budge; they insisted that Anita had the right to speak, and they had the right to listen to her. So firm were they in their insistence that three days before the meeting, Police Commissioner J. F. Morse yielded and wrote to Mrs. Frank G. Law, Oakland Center president:

"Inasmuch as Miss Anita Whitney has been extremely active of late in giving personal support to exponents of radicalism in this city, I have hesitated to permit her to speak. However, after fuller consideration, I have decided to withhold any objection for the present and to merely advise you that my department will hold her strictly to account for any unlawful or seditious statement that she may make.

"Accordingly I have to advise you that I am hereby granting the permission requested by your communication subject to the qualification stated."

The very wording of this formal permit, its ill-graced

reference to unlawful or seditious statements, signified that the police commissioner's letter did not close the matter. And when Anita arrived at the hotel, she was stopped by Inspector Thompson who asked her to turn back. She replied that the choice no longer rested with her, but would have to be resolved by the women who had invited her. Thompson then entered the meeting room and attempted to stampede the club into rescinding its invitation.

"I have direct proof that Miss Whitney has carried food and radical literature to prisoners on Alcatraz Island," shouted Thompson. "Can any of you say that she is not an IWW?"

This latter question was typical of Thompson's appeal. He knew she was not an IWW, and did not dare affirm it directly, yet he employed every devious trick to play on the middle class prejudices of the time against the IWW. He cited Anita's membership on the "IWW Defense Committee" which had collected funds for the defense of James McHugo, arrested under the criminal syndicalism law, and "other radicals on trial."

Anita's presence at the Loring Hall convention and the highly publicized "red flag incident" were both injected into the discussion. But Anita had previously taken the edge off the accusation implied in the incident, for when she had been questioned about it by club leaders, she replied:

"I love the United States, I love the American flag, I am a loyal American citizen and I want an American flag on the platform upon which I am to stand."

After Thompson concluded his appeal, the women debated the issue "amid scenes verging closely on a riot,"

according to The San Francisco Chronicle account. The heat of the discussion and the caliber of the opposition were both indicated by the action of Mrs. E. C. Robinson, wife of an Oakland Superior Judge, who had been selected to preside at the meeting but sent word "that inasmuch as she felt herself to be 100 per cent American she did not care to preside at a meeting where Miss Whitney was to be one of the speakers." Anita's friends, headed by Mrs. Law, strongly defended her right to speak, told of her service to the organization which she had helped found, and of her services to the community. Finally, the vote was 94 to 48 to hear Anita.

Anita mounted the platform possessed of that high emotional pitch which is the prerequisite for great oratory, and her audience had been aroused to the point where the intimate contact between speaker and listener on a high plane of emotion was readily established. Her subject was "The Negro Problem in the United States." She had always felt deeply about the suffering and oppression of the Negro people, and spoke on the theme with the passion of deep conviction, but the intrinsic passion she felt for the subject of her talk now was blended with the passions aroused over the circumstances under which it was to be delivered.

She spoke of the historical origin of the Negro problem in this country, of the shame that perpetuated human chattel slavery for the first four score and seven years of this nation's existence as a democratic republic, of the rationalizations which have been developed to justify this bondage, of the theory that the Negro people are an inferior race.

She told her listeners that while the Negro people

were not inferior as a race, they were subject to inferior opportunities and economic standards. She cited the statistics on the expenditures for the education of Negroes and whites in the southern states; she cited the facts on economic discrimination and political disfranchisement, but the speech reached its climax when she dwelt on lynching, which to her was the most abhorrent individual social phenomenon in the United States.

"Since 1890, when our statistics have their beginning, there have occurred in these United States 3,288 lynchings, 2,580 of colored men and 50 of colored women. I would that I could leave the subject with these bare facts recording numbers, but I feel that we must face all of the barbarity of the situation in order to do our part in blotting this disgrace from our country's record."

Her audience knew Anita well enough to realize that to face "all of the barbarity of the situation," as she put it, that is, to envision all the physical horror of the act of lynching, its bestial sadism, its torment of the victim and degradation of the perpetrator, required almost superhuman effort and sheer courage for one as sensitive and filled with revulsion for violence as she was. But she faced it, and she shared a picture of the full barbarity of lynching with her listeners. She recited an eyewitness account of a lynching that spared none of the senses in its realism.

"Do you wonder," she went on, "that a colored soldier from Georgia, which state had a record of 17 lynchings in 1919, back from overseas said 'that a Negro soldier from Georgia felt safer in No Man's Land than he ever felt before in his life,' or that a colored man once said that if he owned Hell and Texas he would prefer to rent out Texas and live in Hell, for he had these supporting facts

that in Texas the first burning of life took place and that since 1890 Texas had lynched 338 human beings, standing second only to Georgia and Mississippi in this horrible eminence?"

Anita then invited her audience to join in the nationwide movement to halt lynching which had been launched at a national conference in New York in May of that year.

She concluded:

"It is not alone for the Negro man and woman that I plead, but for the fair name of America that this terrible blot on our national escutcheon may be wiped away. Not our country right or wrong, but our country, may she be right, because we, her children, will her so. Let us then both work and fight to make and keep her right so that the flag that we love may truly wave

"O'er the land of the free

"And the home of the brave."

III

The early shadows of a late November evening had flattened the giant silhouettes of downtown Oakland's buildings along the street when Anita left the Hotel Oakland in the company of Mrs. Herman Kower, wife of a University of California professor. She felt tired, but exhilarated and the refrain from the national anthem with which she concluded her speech still was ringing in her mind. The two women had walked only a few steps when out of the shadows emerged Inspectors Thompson and William Kyle.

"You'll have to come with me to the City Hall," said Thompson. "You are under arrest."

"On what charges?"

"Criminal syndicalism."

Anita was visibly taken aback, but she regained her composure quickly, and asked Mrs. Kower to return to the hotel and fetch Miss Gail Laughlin, an attorney who was president of the California Civic League. Mrs. Kower soon returned with Miss Laughlin and the three women, flanked by the two officers, walked to the City Hall. It was about 5 p. m. The banks were closed, the police judges had gone home, and the arrangement for Anita's release on bail encountered some difficulties. At the City Hall, Anita's companions asked Inspector Thompson to remain in the police office with the prisoner until they returned with an order from a judge setting bail and the money necessary to meet the bail set. They were gone only a half hour, but when they returned, the police office was empty. Anita had been rushed to the 11th floor where the city jail was located, had been "frisked" by an attendant and had been thrown into a cell.

Thus began the case of Anita Whitney. This original treatment she received at the hands of the police aroused wide indignation, an indignation that was to grow during the subsequent stages of the case.

She was released on bail. After a hearing before a police judge, she was held over for the grand jury which issued an indictment accusing her of violating the criminal syndicalism law on five counts.

Four of the counts—the teaching of violence, advocacy of violence, justification of violence and committing acts of violence—were virtually dropped by the prosecution although they formally remained part of the indict-

ment which the jury was to consider. Actually, the prosecution dwelt on the charge which said:

"The said Anita Whitney prior to the time of the filing of this information and on or about the 28th day of November, A. D. 1919, at the said county of Alameda, State of California, did then and there unlawfully, wilfully, wrongfully, deliberately and feloniously organize and assist in organizing and was, is and knowingly became a member of an organization, society, group and assemblage of persons organized to advocate, teach, aid and abet criminal syndicalism."

The trial was set for January 27, 1920.

Thus, in the young state of California, the daughter of an old and distinguished American family was caught up by the swirl of events and singled out for vengeance by the reigning reaction. But a few months later, at the opposite end of the continent, in the ancient state of Massachusetts, two Italian immigrants, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, a shoe maker and fish peddler, were caught by the same swirl of events and they, too, were singled out for vengeance. It was a strange parallel. . . . And for seven years, from 1920 to 1927, both cases were to drag on, the case of this daughter of distinguished American lineage and the case of the two immigrant Italian workmen. . . .

IV

When the trial opened before Superior Judge James G. Quinn on Tuesday, January 27, 1920, Anita was represented by Thomas H. O'Connor, a brilliant criminal

lawyer, young for the eminence he had attained in the profession. O'Connor was one of those attorneys who had the reputation of never having lost a case. It was he who successfully defended Israel Weinberg and Rena Mooney in the Preparedness Day bombing case after Tom Mooney and Warren Billings had been convicted. His services were secured for Anita through the intervention of Fremont Older, then editor of *The Call*, and an admirer of Anita's who had been associated with her in many a social reform movement, and who took a direct and active interest in her defense.

O'Connor possessed the virtues which are regarded as typically Irish. He was a warm and passionate and friendly human being, of great wit and charm, a magnificent courtroom orator whose eloquence, coupled with a keen understanding of people, rendered him the master of juries. He was a stocky man inclined to stoutness which did not convey a sense of flabbiness, but rather made him look like a larger man than he was, possessed of great and intense energy.

Nominally, his associate counsel was J. E. Pemberton, an old friend of Anita's who had entered the case during its preliminary stages, but was conscious of his own limitations in trying it before a jury. Pemberton was an old Socialist, a country judge who looked like one, his gray hair and sparse white moustache contrasting with O'Connor's luxuriant black mane.

District Attorney Ezra Decoto had chosen John U. Calkins and Myron Harris as the prosecution trial lawyers.

Anita had known Judge Quinn during her tenure as charities director, and also had some strange sidelights

on the prosecution. Decoto was the man who succeeded her as probation officer in Alameda County. She had served voluntarily, without pay. Decoto stepped in when a salary was provided for the job.

Her indirect acquaintance with Myron Harris, the prosecution's orator and flag waver, was even more piquant. In December, she had spent a brief time in Alameda County Jail while awaiting release on a writ of habeas corpus after she had been held over to face criminal syndicalism charges. There, as she later related, she met "a young and pretty woman" who told her "a sordid tale of how, though a wife and mother she had grown to love a man, himself a husband and a father—a deputy in the District Attorney's office, how she had lived with him, and lavished upon him all the means at her command, bought for him the car in which he drove about the city." This woman told Anita that she had been arrested for passing a bad check which she had signed to pay for a picture to adorn her lover's office.

While Anita omitted names in recounting this tale of great love and petty crime, a local paper said she was "undoubtedly referring to Hazel Vallejo King and Myron Harris, son of Judge T. W. Harris."

V

O'Connor entered the courtroom showing signs of great strain, lacking his usual virile self-assurance. An influenza epidemic was raging and his little daughter had been stricken with the disease and was even then fighting for her life. All his passionate warmth fed the great affection he had for the child, her suffering and the im-

minent peril to her life allowed him no peace. He had been retained only a short time before the trial date, and his distraction over the little girl's illness precluded any thorough preparation.

He pleaded for a one-week postponement to give him time to prepare, but Judge Quinn brusquely denied the plea. On the second day of the trial, O'Connor himself was stricken with the flu. Again he pleaded for a continuance. Again the plea was denied. On the third day, O'Connor's temperature had risen to 103 degrees, but the judge insisted: the trial must go on, and the selection of a jury having been completed, the prosecution placed on the stand its first witness, Ed Condon, a newspaperman who had reported the Loring Hall convention for the Oakland Enquirer, and whose testimony at the police court hearing was largely responsible for the indictment drawn against Anita.

On direct examination, Condon told of what he had observed at the convention, verified that Anita was present and had taken an active part (serving on the resolutions committee). He told again the story of the "red flag" incident, relating that during the convention's morning session, he had noticed in the hall a glass bookcase or antique cabinet which contained an American flag. In the afternoon, he said, "there was a large piece of red cloth hung entirely across the bookcase so that the American flag was no longer visible."

At one point during Condon's examination, a messenger entered the courtroom, informed O'Connor there was a telephone call for him. O'Connor asked to be excused, and after receiving the court's permission, left hurriedly.

He returned greatly agitated, and Anita sensed the telephone message was of great moment.

When the prosecution turned the witness over to him, O'Connor sparred for a while, asked Condon routine questions, settling him into the groove of yes-or-no answers. Casually, O'Connor swung the interrogation around to the subject of the telephone message.

"All right," he said, "we will come to the draping of the American flag."

Q. Do you know a man by the name of Fenton Thompson?

A. I do, yes.

Q. Did Fenton Thompson ever tell you that a plant that he had at the meeting draped that flag?

A. He did, yes.

Q. He did?

A. Yes.

The courtroom was in commotion. This confession by the chief prosecution witness that the prosecution's trump card was actually a police frameup startled judge, jury, the prosecution counsel and the spectators. O'Connor, having cornered the quarry, pressed on.

Q. In other words, then, the red flag that you talked about this morning as having been thrown over the American flag was placed there by a dupe that Fenton Thompson had in that convention. Is that the fact?

A. That is what he told me.

Q. Yes. What else did Fenton Thompson tell you?

A. When?

Q. At any time—about that convention, or any other scheme or trick, or dastardly outrage that he had perpetrated?

O'Connor's voice had risen, the words came quick and fast, stinging in their impact. The witness floundered. He stammered: "He told me that he, that is, as far as I know of anything that he told me—"

O'Connor cut in: "Relate the whole conversation that you had with him about planting the American flag under the red table cloth."

A. Well, that was two weeks following; I believe about two weeks following the incident, there was a vast roar in the papers and we were discussing this, and he asked me if this American flag had been draped—some of the newspapers had said it had, and some said it had not, and I was the one who knew, so he asked me if it had and I said yes, it had with this banner, not a flag; that is, I would say a piece of cloth; in this case it happened to be red. It was more or less of a table cloth, I would say. And he said, "Do you want to know who did that?" I said, "Do you know?" and he said, "One of my men."

Q. That was what Fenton Thompson said?

A. Yes.

O'Connor believed that the full scope of Thompson's infamous act had been impressed upon the jury, and he staged the great dramatic moment of the session.

"Where is Fenton Thompson?" he shouted.

"He is not here just now, is he?" answered the bewildered Condon, searching the courtroom with his eyes.

"There he is." And all eyes turned in the direction of Condon's pointing finger, toward the cringing figure of Fenton Thompson.

But Thompson was not to be allowed to cringe in his seat in the rear of the courtroom. Later, after O'Connor had continued to shake the witness with the tenacity of

a terrier, exacting from Condon the confession that although he knew that the "red flag" was a plant he had not revealed that fact to the preliminary inquiry, but rather allowed the original impression, created in the newspapers, to remain; after Condon had offered the weak alibi that he was silent only because no one had previously asked him whether the "red flag" was a plant, O'Connor again turned all attention to Thompson.

"Mr. Condon," he said, "as late as this morning, Fenton Thompson told you that he had placed the red flag or that one of his men had placed the red flag over the American flag, isn't that a fact?"

A. Yes.

Q. In this courtroom?

A. In this courtroom. Yes.

O'Connor turned to the red squad chief, "Thompson, will you stand over here, so that the jury may see you?"

Thompson stepped forward.

O'Connor to Condon, "Is this the man who told you that one of his men draped the American flag with a red banner?"

"It is."

Having exposed the ramifications of this "red flag" incident, O'Connor addressed himself to the prosecution: "I take it, gentlemen, that the red banner goes out of this case now, altogether."

"There is no question about it, Mr. O'Connor," Harris replied. "The red banner does go out of this case at this time as far as we are concerned."

At the end of this day's exciting session, O'Connor's fever was running high and he once more requested the court to postpone the case, but to no avail.

VI

The next morning O'Connor was back in court, a very sick man. Thompson was placed on the stand by the prosecution and he categorically denied Condon's story. O'Connor heatedly protested that the prosecution could not thus impeach its own witness. Calkins angrily replied for the prosecution that they merely wanted to put their cards on the table.

"The cards should have been on the table yesterday," snapped O'Connor, "before the gentlemen left, which gave Mr. Thompson 36 or 24 hours to think over his testimony. It was Mr. Thompson's cue to come forth yesterday and say 'That is a lie,' and he stood there silent with not a word from him."

When time for cross-examination came, O'Connor, his voice so hoarse he could not speak above a whisper, asked that he be given an opportunity to cross-examine at some later date when his voice and health would be more equal to the important task at hand. Over the prosecution's strenuous objections, the request was granted but O'Connor was never to cross-examine Thompson who had now emerged as the arch villain of the case.

Thompson, even in his appearance, was the perfect villain, the prototype of hundreds of "bad guys" in the days when the films were silent and made no pretense of sophistication. Just short of six feet in height, he was a thin, swarthy man, his mouth twisted into an almost perpetual sneering grin. He was a bad man with a bad record. Some years before he was accused of attempting rape on a 14-year-old girl and left town while the scandal was hushed up. During his enforced vacation, he was in

San Diego and was mixed up in another scrape wherein one of the many Spreckels' accused him of blackmail. Thompson's character was not improved by his activities during the war when he first served as a U. S. Deputy Marshal in Texas and later as a Department of Justice agent in Los Angeles and San Diego, indulging in the highhanded and illegal practices of the department during the war years. He was a vulnerable and ambitious man who even then was engaged in intrigue to become police chief and was reputedly linked to a series of shady real estate deals in behalf of one of the police commissioners.

O'Connor's first and eminently successful thrust at Thompson reflected his intention to wage an aggressive defense and indicated his line of attack. In private conversation with Anita he had boasted he "had the goods" on Thompson and his connections with the reigning political machine in Alameda County. Thompson was the man to get, and O'Connor was the man to get him.

VII

When court reconvened on Monday, February 2, O'Connor was home in bed in a semi-delirious state. The exertion of the trial while he was running a high fever, the long ferry trip across the bay both morning and night in the late January cold, to and from his home in San Francisco, had wrecked his flu-ridden body. A jurywoman, Mrs. Lucille Stegeman, was also confined by the flu, but Judge Quinn insisted on rushing the trial through and only the most strenuous objections by Pemberton won a continuance until Wednesday.

On Wednesday, Pemberton reported the defense as

"not ready"; not only was O'Connor still absent, but Anita, although she had come to court, was suffering from a mild case of flu. Hard-bitten Judge Quinn swore in an alternate juror to replace the still ailing Mrs. Stegeman and ordered the case to proceed.

Inquiries as to O'Connor's condition brought from Prosecutor Harris the admission that he had telephoned Mrs. O'Connor that morning and was informed her husband had been delirious during the night.

"What if anything did she say as to his mental condition?" Pemberton asked.

"She said that he was very much worried over the outcome of this case, and that she thought a continuance of this case might relieve him mentally at least," Harris replied.

Pemberton interjected: "From my information I think that it is dangerous to Mr. O'Connor to be unable to tell him that the case is postponed. Miss Whitney tells me that she tried to get another counsel and did not succeed. It is not to be wondered at, for I doubt if any counsel unless it was one who had a very good opinion of his own ability, would think himself able to come in at this stage of the case and do justice to the defendant."

Pemberton explained that Anita had never considered him as her trial attorney, and that he had planned to step out of the case entirely and leave the full burden to O'Connor. He asked for a postponement either to permit O'Connor's return or allow Anita to secure adequate counsel, but the judge was averse to any delay.

As he was explaining his reasons for opposing delay, Anita interrupted.

"Your honor—" she said.

JUDGE QUIN: Just a minute—you have to be represented by your counsel.

ANITA: I am not represented by my counsel, your honor.

PEMBERTON: I withdraw from the case if the court please.

JUDGE QUIN: The court will not permit you to withdraw at this time.

PEMBERTON: I decline to go on with the case.

JUDGE QUIN: Then we will proceed and go on with the case; you must go on, Mr. Pemberton.

Judge Quinn threatened Pemberton with contempt of court proceedings if he persisted in his refusal to try the case.

"Your honor may be all powerful here," Pemberton flashed, "but you are not the keeper of my conscience, and I cannot conscientiously represent this defendant. I am following out your order with the feeling that it will cost O'Connor his life and will result in a miscarriage of justice for Miss Whitney. . . ."

Through a long and dreary day, the trial dragged on in a desultory manner. The following two days, Thursday and Friday, court was adjourned due to the illness of H. A. Thompson, an 83-year-old juror who had been distinguished by earnest but seemingly futile efforts to follow the proceedings.

On Saturday, Anita rose early. She had an important appointment with O'Connor. During his illness she had visited him at his home and they discussed the case at length. At first, he seemed confident that he would return to the trial and vehemently insisted on one point, that the cross-examination of Thompson be left to him. As his illness became more serious and the judge showed

no inclination to postpone the case, O'Connor sensed he would never return to that courtroom, and he requested Anita to come to his home that Saturday when he would dictate the line of questioning to be followed in the examination of Thompson. Anita had been greatly worried by the dispirited progress of her case since O'Connor's enforced absence, and now she looked forward to this meeting with great anticipation, hoping that it would mark a turn in the tide. Preoccupied with such thoughts, she arrived at the ferry landing in Oakland, ferried across to San Francisco, and it was not until she stepped into the Ferry Building that her eyes were struck by a headline in the San Francisco Examiner: "O'CONNOR, WHITNEY LAWYER, DEAD." She peered anxiously beneath the headline and read:

"Thomas M. O'Connor, one of the best known and most brilliant members of the San Francisco Bar, died at his home, 1360 Fourth Avenue, from an attack of influenza, shortly after one o'clock this morning. . . ."

O'Connor had died after hours of delirious struggle with his wife and a nurse to get out of bed. In his fevered delirium, he kept muttering, "Let me go, let me go, I must return to that trial. . . ."

O'Connor's tragic exit from the case sealed its outcome. He had insisted before his death that Nathan C. Coghlan succeed him. Anita, lacking confidence in Coghlan, objected, but O'Connor persisted and out of deference to the wishes of a sick man who faced death, she agreed.

With O'Connor out of the way, the prosecution took the offense and injected the issue of the IWW into the trial. Anita was admittedly not a member of the IWW,

but the Communist Labor Party platform, in its section on industrial unionism, contained a clause which said:

"In any mention of revolutionary industrial unionism in this country, there must be recognized the immense effect upon the American labor movement of the propaganda and example of the Industrial Workers of the World, whose long and valiant struggle and heroic sacrifices in the class war have earned the affection and respect of all workers everywhere."

This tribute to the militancy of the IWW and its effect upon the labor movement was interpreted by the prosecution to mean that the Communist Labor Party approved of the IWW and all its acts, at least to the point of abetting them. Stretching this tenuous reasoning a bit farther, the prosecution maintained that it was privileged to introduce evidence as to the alleged criminal syndicalist acts perpetrated by the IWW, and that Anita, as a member of the Communist Labor Party, belonged to an organization which approved these acts.

As its experts on the IWW the prosecution introduced John Dymond and Ernest Coutts, a pair of professional informers who had been arrested a year before in a roundup of Wobblies, and had bought their freedom by turning state's evidence. After this initial performance, they toured the country from case to case, and admitted that on at least one occasion they had been paid \$250 for a single performance. By the time they testified in the Whitney case, they performed with the ease of troopers at the end of a successful run of a Broadway stage show. The lines were cut and dried although lurid, and the prosecutor simply acted as a stooge to pace the monologue and give the appearance of examination.

Typical of the routine was the following dialogue:

HARRIS: Mr. Coutts, you have testified concerning meetings at Sacramento of the IWW organization. Was anything said concerning hop fields?

(Coghlan objected and was duly overruled.)

COUTTS: Yes, there was a great deal said about hop fields.

HARRIS: What please?

COUTTS: That it would be a good idea to destroy them, to make the hop growers see the error of their ways for sending Ford and Suhr to jail. They claimed they were responsible for sending them to jail.

HARRIS: What in the meetings was suggested?

COUTTS: Well, at the meetings there was nothing suggested. It was an understanding through the members outside of the meetings as to what was to be done.

Coutts was then encouraged to tell what sort of understanding existed "outside of the meetings" and he obliged:

"Well, they were to do everything, use sabotage on them, as was said, and do everything they could to destroy profits in the wheat fields, or rather, hop fields, even to burn down the hop kilns, or anything of that kind."

Even more melodramatic was Coutts' tale of traveling through the Stockton area in a houseboat, along with two men named "Rubio" and "Anderson," placing phosphor bombs in haystacks and barns and then, at a distance, glorying in the flames which leaped toward the sky.

These tales of sabotage and incendiarism which were told in quick succession for several days strongly influenced the middle class jury and the passivity of the defense permitted the prosecution to leave the impression

that Anita was somehow associated with these alleged acts of violence.

The "red flag" bobbed up again. Despite the prosecution's solemn pledge that the incident was out of the case, Harris in his summation exhorted the jurors as follows:

"Let me comment on that (the red flag incident), ladies and gentlemen of the jury. I say to you that if the police department were instrumental in placing that flag there, there is no censure too severe for them. That is the position taken by the District Attorney's office of this county. We do not approve of those tactics and never shall.

"But then, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, let me say to you just one more word about that flag and I am through as to the flag incident. If you were there, or if I were there, and our 'Old Glory' as she stands was covered by that dirty red rag, what would you have done, or what would I have done? I would have yanked it off from the face of that American flag and thrown it into the street, and I haven't been forty years in California yet, either.

"And what would you have done? You would have torn it down, and you would have gone home never to think of the Communist Labor Party again except with disrespect. But did Anita Whitney do that? I ask you as men and women and lovers of the flag, did Anita Whitney do that? Not for a single minute, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, not for one minute did Anita Whitney do that which you and I have been brought up to do, namely, to revere and honor that flag that stands for us, and speaks for our freedom and love of country."

VIII

At 4:55 on the afternoon of Friday, February 20, the jury of six men and six women, having heard the final pleas by rival counsel and the instructions of the judge, retired to deliberate. The women were on the jury largely thanks to the efforts of Anita Whitney for she, more than any other one person, was responsible for the passage of the law permitting women to sit on juries. For almost six hours the jury deliberated, returning at 10:45 p. m. A jury woman read the verdict, guilty on the first count, the other four counts dismissed.

Normally, after rendering a verdict, a jury retires from the public scene. But not this one. It left Alameda County aghast with a bill of \$3000 to cover its expenses. Popular superstition has it that it is the condemned man who eats a hearty breakfast. In this instance, those who did the condemning ate hearty breakfasts, dinners and suppers, smoked fine cigars, kept themselves well groomed, dipped into popular magazines at random. The jury lived handsomely during the 24 days it required to arrive at the conclusion that Anita Whitney should spend the next one to fourteen years of her life behind the bars of the women's prison at San Quentin.

The itemized bill included the following:

742 cigars	at \$.121½	\$92.75
14 haircuts	at 1.00	14.00
47 shaves	at .50	23.50
toilet articles		50.00
magazines, cigarettes, candy, chewing gum		50.00

One paper commented: "Outside of that they had a tough time, but next time it is anticipated that a trip to

Palm Beach or the Canadian Rockies may be thrown in as a sort of diversion."

Another paper wondered: "Can four male addicts to the fragrant tobacco weed, serving on the Anita Whitney jury, consume 742 cigars at 12½ cents apiece in 24 days and nights of jury service?"

Still another paper exclaimed: "And when the jury ate!—well, the bill at the Hotel Oakland for board and lodging was \$2238."

Convicting Communists was not an unpleasant pastime in those days. Each of the four cigar smokers averaged better than seven cigars a day, while all the jurors ate and slept royally at \$9 per day a head.

Payment for all this? They demanded that Anita pay with one to fourteen years of her life.

IX

On Tuesday, February 24, it was standing room only in Judge Quinn's court. Sentence was to be passed on Anita Whitney. What transpired was described by Alma Reed, reporter for *The Call*, in a special story for *The New York Times* of September 17, 1922. Miss Reed wrote: "As she (Anita) entered the courtroom to receive her sentence, I was present to witness the silent tribute of 300 men and women prominently identified with the leading social service and public welfare agencies of the state. They arose as she passed down the aisle to her seat, and they remained standing until sentence had been pronounced."

The sentence, as prescribed by the law, was imprisonment of from one to fourteen years. And of all the

persons in that courtroom who heard that sentence read, Anita was the most composed, the most poised. Miss Reed testified: "Throughout the trial—throughout the ordeals of her conviction and sentence—this frail, quiet-mannered, soft-voiced woman maintained a stoic poise which was conceded to be remarkable."

Anita was hustled off to the county jail, and there Alma Reed visited her and wrote:

"Her attitude—in its calmness, its poise and its perfect freedom from resentment or bitterness—is worthy of the great philosophers of ancient times, or of the Christian martyrs.

"In fact, she seemed to hold a rightful place in that select company of the earth's noblest souls as she told me of her life, her traditions, her principles and ever so modestly her achievements.

" 'Why should I not be calm and happy?' she asked with a smile when I expressed surprise at her cheerfulness. 'I feel that I have done no wrong and I can feel no oppression. I have simply walked a path.

" 'I never tried to uplift people, for I frankly deprecate the "holier-than-thou" attitude. But things have come to me and I have done them, and I would have been a coward if I had not.' "

Anita also stated her creed of Americanism in the following terms:

"The first ten amendments to the Constitution is the American Bill of Rights, and the very first amendment provides that Congress shall not even make a law curtailing the freedom of speech, freedom of the press and liberty of conscience.

"But it is from the Declaration of Independence, and

not from the Constitution, that we date our birth as a Nation. Its fundamental principle is the inalienable right of every one to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

"My father always taught me to stand up to things—to judge for myself the difference between right and wrong. And after all, the greatest satisfaction in life comes from obeying your own conscience and helping in your own small way to make the world a little better for someone else because you have lived."

Anita's indignation at the prison regime and her sympathy for the other five occupants of the women's section of the county jail were such as to permit of no pre-occupation with self.

The plight of two occupants of an adjoining cell aroused her deepest compassion. One was a drug addict, and although still young, her body and will had been wrecked by the constant use of drugs. She was said to have sought imprisonment in the hope of a cure, and the prison doctor was applying a primitive cure, administering an ever-lessening daily allowance of drugs, but without scientific treatment to cushion the shock to an organism deprived of the stimulants to which it had become accustomed. As a result, the young woman suffered cruel torment, smoked constantly in the futile hope of relieving the nervous tension.

"When the nervousness became unbearable, she would inject tobacco juice into her veins," Anita wrote in an article for *The Survey*, December 25, 1920. "This she did by tearing an opening in her leg and injecting the liquid obtained by heating tobacco and water in a spoon.

"Sharing her cell was a quiet little woman convicted

on a charge of obtaining goods under false pretenses, who has earned to my way of thinking a place among the saints rather than an indeterminate sentence in San Quentin where she now is. Such patience, such kindness without a word of complaint or disparagement to her trying cell mate! Because the 'dope fiend' suffered bitterly from the cold, her ministering companion slept with the window closed while the cell filled from time to time with the smoke from the wretched tobacco that the prison provided and was wafted down the corridor to the other cells. She was called upon time after time during the night to assist in relieving the nervous suffering of the hopeless wretch, burning her fingers over and over as she held lighted matches under the spoon to heat the liquid which was to give some measure of relief to the tortured body. . . ."

The physical comforts of prison life can be gathered from Anita's description of her own cell:

"In it there were, as in all the cells, two bunks, the upper one folded up against the wall by day, the lower one stationary. The foundation of the bed was an iron gridiron, on which was placed a thin mattress. One wakened in the night stiff and sore of hip. To the placid prisoner there was always the thought that there was 'another hip' to which one could turn for relief and perhaps more sleep. Though papers and magazines were not allowed, some had been slipped in surreptitiously, and with these the fortunate possessors lined the iron grating and so made sleep less illusory. A wash stand with running cold water and an open toilet took up part of the small cell, one wooden chair, a stool, and a small table with a tiny drawer completed the furnishings. The floor

was of cement, the walls and ceiling of iron, the window and door barred."

Although two of the prisoners, to Anita's own knowledge, had social diseases, no precautions at all were taken against the spread of infection to the others. All the prisoners used the same small galvanized tub to wash clothes, and no boiling water was provided. Anita's own cell mate, a prostitute arrested for shop lifting, certainly had been exposed to infection, yet in their common cell, they were compelled to share the available facilities.

The prison regime was as simple as it was monotonous. At eight in the morning the cell doors were unlocked and breakfast was served, mush, milk, bread and what was euphemistically termed coffee. At noon, dinner: meat and potatoes, rice and macaroni, beans, bread and tea. Not all these dishes were served at one meal, but they were the ingredients from which the menus were concocted. Supper was much the same. There was never any fruit or fresh vegetables. The cell doors were closed between six and eight in the evening. Lights went out at eight, sometimes at nine, but always without any warning. "After lights were out there was total darkness until daylight came again and ushered in its dreary monotony of waking hours."

Anita's article for *The Survey*, detailing conditions in the jail, concluded with this challenge: "Thus does the state treat its erring citizens. The system is vengeful, merciless, and needlessly ignorant of the source of crime and human needs. Are we building up hate? Then, must we reap the whirlwind?"

For eleven days, Anita remained in prison while the courts denied her release on bail or on a writ of habeas

corpus pending an appeal. Only after three distinguished doctors testified that continued imprisonment would be permanently injurious to her health, she was then 52, was bail set at \$10,000 and she was finally released.

X

Anita was but one of scores of persons who by then had either been rushed through the California courts in perfunctory trials and convicted of criminal syndicalism, or were awaiting trial. However, her comrades as well as persons nationally interested in halting the wave of criminal syndicalism prosecutions and wiping the statute off the books either through a court decision or legislative action, decided to make hers the test case. The decision was understandable. Here was a woman with a long line of American ancestry, whose whole life had been devoted to the public good even by bourgeois liberal standards, whose very person was associated with all that is fine and humane, whose deeds and public pronouncements were in themselves a refutation of the charges on which she was convicted. The decision was wise. The movement in defense of Anita Whitney was unique for its sweep, its scope, its diversified social composition. It was a magnificent personal tribute to Anita Whitney, as well as a profound expression of the wide opposition to the post-war reaction and hysteria.

In the very initial stages of the case those who interceded in her behalf included the ranking leaders of religious life in San Francisco: Archbishop Edward Hanna of the Catholic Church; Dean Gresham of Grace Cathedral, one of the most influential Protestant clergymen;

Rabbi Martin A. Meyer of Temple Emanu-El, the most important Jewish congregation. Dr. Adelaide Brown of the Board of Health, Rudolph Spreckels, O. K. Cushing, William Denman, Dr. Jessica Peixotto of the University of California economics department, Miriam Michelson and others protested her conviction and sentence. Even State Senator William Kehoe, nominal sponsor of the criminal syndicalism law, and W. J. Locke, then city attorney of Alameda, who as assemblyman had been one of the most active proponents of the criminal syndicalism law in the lower house of the legislature, branded the conviction unjust.

The people and movements with which Anita had been associated now rallied to her defense. The Irish nationalist movement came to her aid, for had she not been an active organizer and leader in the struggle for Irish independence? The Irish World noted the fact that "Miss Whitney took up the cause of struggling Ireland, and did gallant service in organizing the Irish women of San Francisco," and termed her sentence "a sample of hideous injustice"; it took pride in that gallant Irishman, Tom O'Connor, and dissassociated itself from the Irish judge by a reference to the "despotism of the Black and Tan judge Jim Quinn." The typical narrow nationalism of The Irish World lent a humorous touch to its comment; it blamed the whole affair on the English Consul who "has ruled in San Francisco."

The Women's Christian Temperance Union and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Friends of Irish Freedom, all of whom knew Anita Whitney, joined the protest movement. Among the most active people were the old suffragettes.

Mrs. Frank G. Law, president of the Oakland Center, California Civic League, a prominent club woman and social worker, expressed their viewpoint when she said:

"The women of California have not forgotten what Charlotte Anita Whitney has done for them in the past. She was a leader in California's fight for suffrage, and the best people of the state were proud to enlist under her leadership. She has deservedly won our lasting gratitude."

The most amazing tribute to Anita came from The San Francisco Monitor, official organ of the San Francisco Catholic Archdiocese. The Monitor, in an editorial titled "Another Miscarriage of Justice," cited several contemporary cases of women who had been tried for murder and acquitted by juries despite overwhelming evidence against them, and then went on:

". . . Suppose you are, for example, an American citizen, a woman, highly educated, a university graduate, of distinguished family, who has spent her life in doing good for others and acting as secretary for charity boards, befriending the poor and oppressed, fighting for liberty of conscience and speech, the champion of downtrodden and enslaved races, visiting those in prison, one who would not harm the hair of a child's head—wouldn't you expect at least to be allowed to remain unmolested in carrying out your noble mission of Christian charity in behalf of God's distressed and suffering children?

"You have another guess coming because you do not appreciate the blessings of democracy as it is practised by the repressers of freedom in America today. Such an exquisite and charming friend of humanity as we have indicated above, a noble and beautiful character who

would not crush the broken reed nor quench the burning flax, has been found guilty, not in a Turkish or even Bolshevik court of justice, but in an American court for being a horrible and blood-thirsty criminal syndicalist who would overthrow our government by force and violence. If she had only taken a pistol and shot down some one in cold blood, she would probably have been declared not guilty. To this gentle woman of peace and charity, Miss Anita Whitney, who was sentenced to an indeterminate term in prison last Tuesday in Oakland, only sympathy is extended as a martyr victim to the present wave of un-American hysteria and illiberalism which is sweeping the United States, encouraged by all the reactionaries and profiteers in the land. They are sowing dragons' teeth. As in the early Church which stood for the poor and lowly ones of earth, the blood of martyrs is the seed of a new and better order of things where true democracy and Christian justice shall reign."

And if this Catholic organ had to revert to the early Christian martyrs to find a parallel for this "noble and beautiful character who would not crush the broken reed nor quench the burning flax," others, too, sought historical parallels. The Rev. Robert Whitaker, writing in *The Western Worker* (March 3, 1920), said that the conviction of Anita Whitney put Oakland "in the same category with the Athens which poisoned Socrates, the Jerusalem which crucified Jesus, the England which burned Latimer and Ridley." The *San Francisco Call* recalled the persecution of the Abolitionists and the tyranny of the Puritans, saying: ". . . There is nothing in the history of America to serve as a precedent for her imprisonment. The colonists were wrong when they

burned witches, the people of Massachusetts and Connecticut were wrong when they spat upon the Abolitionists, and the people of California may be equally wrong when they send Anita Whitney to prison." The Rev. Dr. Charles N. Lathrop, in a talk at Grace Cathedral, said: "If there had been a criminal syndicalism law in the dawn of the Christian era, St. Peter and St. Paul would have been the first men incarcerated, for they were the first Communists."

The labor movement, through the Labor Defense League, was the first to champion her cause. The defense league had been formed early in 1919 to campaign for repeal of the criminal syndicalism law and to defend those arrested under it. Anita immediately became associated with it, and served as treasurer. Upon her arrest, the league issued this statement:

"This league, representing 40,000 organized workers in the bay district, emphatically protests the arrest of Miss Anita Whitney. We maintain that the real reason for her arrest lies in the fact that she is treasurer for the Labor Defense League. Our league was organized to bring about the repeal of the criminal syndicalism law and to provide defense for working men persecuted under it. Miss Whitney became a member and an official of this league upon the showing of labor's legislative agent that the syndicalism law was class legislation intended for the use of capital against labor. She is not alone in her opposition to this law. The California State Federation of Labor is on record against it, as are many local unions and central councils in this state.

"Miss Whitney is a member of one of the oldest families in California. She is a woman of wealth. She

is a woman of broad mind, big heart, beautiful soul. Miss Whitney for years has been a champion and true friend of labor. Her arrest in the opinion of this league is merely an incident in a nationwide campaign to crush out all labor organizations whether conservative or radical. As Miss Whitney has never been found absent when labor was in jeopardy so will she now find the thousands of workers connected with the Labor Defense League at her side."

The statement was signed by members of the league's executive committee, including L. J. Cole, Machinists Local 68; George Kidwell, Bakery Wagon Drivers Local 484; L. Keller, Barbers Local 48; L. V. Frates, Carpenters Local 36; A. Fagama, Boilermakers Local 233.

There is one ironic sidelight to the statement, its claim that Anita's association with the league was responsible for her arrest. There probably was some truth to that. But the Irish freedom movement believed that her espousal of its cause brought down the vengeance of the authorities. Anita was inclined to believe that regardless of the later ramifications of the case, it had its origins among the Irish politicians whose enmity she incurred by chairmanship of the American Irish Educational League. Reform elements felt that Anita's association with them indirectly contributed to her persecution, and even that theory contained some grains of truth, for the Alameda County vice interests and their political servants carried a grudge against Anita since her campaign for the red light abatement law and they were among the most persistent in pressing the case against her in Oakland. There was a variety of motives behind the prosecution but they were all tied together in the common hatred of the

madames and white slavers, the machine politicians and open shoppers for Anita as a member of the state committee of the Communist Labor Party.

Some of her lesser champions, drawn from among political small fry primarily, were simply awed by her family and background. Alameda City Attorney W. J. Locke, for example, said: "I cannot bring myself to believe that a woman of education and refinement, particularly one whose forefathers rendered such great service to our country, is an advocate of revolution and violence.

"It seems incredible that the grandniece of the man who laid the first Atlantic cable is a disciple of destruction. Another granduncle of this woman, David Dudley Field, was a famous lawyer who first codified the laws of this country, while still another was the late Supreme Court Justice Stephen J. Field, one of the ablest jurists this country ever produced. Is it possible that an educated woman of such ancestry would destroy the country her forebears did so much to build up? I cannot believe it."

The opposition also harped on this theme of family and background, and insisted that precisely because she was a woman of education and independent means, she should be hanged for betraying her class. They hated her as an apostate. Most virulent were the McClatchy papers which have distinguished themselves as the self-appointed hangmen and jailers of California's labor martyrs, which vilified Tom Mooney and J. B. McNamara to the day of their death. With venomous sting, The Sacramento Bee generalized: "The urge of these wealthy, well read, but really ill-educated women is the urge of idle restlessness, the crave for adventure, the lust for power—even if it be the leadership of the lawless in the

assault upon the citadels of civilization." The Bee's indictment was: "Charlotte Anita Whitney, a woman of education and with all the advantages, possessed of wealth and with the opportunity of doing great good to her fellow creatures, has prostituted her talents for years to the service of the lawless and disorderly." The Bee even drew the Kipling moral that "the female of the species is more deadly than the male."

The tenor of the opposition was also exemplified in an anonymous letter Anita received from "An American and Proud To Be One." This American who was not sufficiently proud to sign his or her name, wrote: ". . . The people in general should deeply regret that the influenza didn't get you in place of some of our true Americans. America does not want such criminals as you, and I consider anyone who aids you is a pro-German, or radical, also." Among the epithets directed at Anita in this note were "pro-German radical . . . traitor to Americanism . . . government over-thrower . . . low specimen of Americanism . . . reptile . . . scum of the earth."

XI

"While there is a lower class I am in it; while there is a criminal element I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free."

—Eugene Victor Debs.

For Anita Whitney, this lofty moral concept of Debs served as a guide during the seven years of her ordeal. She did not relish martyrdom or being the principal of a cause celebre. With the modesty so typical of her, she

tried to shrink to the corner of the stage upon which she had been thrust unwittingly as the central figure. She was haunted by one fear, not the fear of prison, but the fear of somehow being set apart from others persecuted under the criminal syndicalism law, of being deemed, for one reason or another, more worthy than others who had been arrested. She had Debs' deep feeling of solidarity with those others, the 150 men imprisoned under the criminal syndicalism law, the 70 of them who were still behind the prison bars in 1925, she identified herself with them, felt that while they were in prison, she could not be free. While many came to her aid from diverse motives, mostly associated with her person and her past activities, she struggled valiantly to keep the principle involved uppermost, to make her case not only hers personally, but the case of all those jailed on criminal syndicalism charges.

Again and again, in private conversation and public statement, there recurred the theme expressed in a newspaper interview in 1922.

". . . I want everyone who knows me to know this—that I am not whimpering at my sentence. I am no better than many of the prisoners at San Quentin, nor is anyone who ever lived!

"I am not one to put myself up above the unfortunate. If I go to the penitentiary, very well. That is my sentence, and I will serve it. It may be terrible for me, it has been worse for others.

"I go without retrenching one bit upon the platform of my life. I tried to uphold the Constitution. Why can't everyone read the Declaration of Independence and believe in it? It is the finest rule of life we have. To all

people an equal opportunity—can anything be greater than that?

"If believing in equality is a crime against my country, then I am guilty.

"If belief in self expression that does not interfere with the lives of others is criminal, then I am criminal.

"And if it is an offense to believe that men should struggle for decent hours and a decent wage, that children should be born with health and a chance for happiness, and that women should be granted the privilege of decent working hours and plenty of rest and decent pay, then I deserve San Quentin."

Anita had no illusions about San Quentin. The eleven days in the county jail were but a foretaste. Yet, she said, "I am facing San Quentin with perfect peace. If I go, I go. I know what it means. I have been in the women's section there, and it is horrible. The women have no room for exercise, and no work; they sit about and relate obscenities. I know the shame of the place that never wears off. Yet—I go willingly, knowing that I have never done anything but attempt to help."

From the outset, she refused to plead for probation. When Alma Reed brought up the subject shortly after her conviction, Anita exclaimed, "Probation! Why of course not! That would be acknowledging that I have done wrong. I am here for a principle, and my acceptance of probation would cut the principle from under me. I am a free born American citizen. I will not and cannot tolerate the surveillance and the slavery that probation offers. Why, I should be ashamed to look those people whose opinion I value in the face again. I should be nothing but a living lie."

XII

In the court of public opinion, Anita Whitney had won an overwhelming verdict in her favor, but in the courts of law, she suffered one adverse decision after another. She had obtained competent legal counsel, John Francis Neylan who entered the case in 1920 on the insistence, he said, "of several of the foremost prelates of the Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish faiths. . . .", and served without fee. Neylan, who later was to gain notoriety as chief counsel for William Randolph Hearst, was then a prominent attorney, having served as the chairman of the State Board of Control, entrusted with supervision of the state's charitable institutions. On her lobbying visits to Sacramento, Anita had made the acquaintance of Neylan in his official capacity, and more often than not they clashed over the various reforms which Anita was promoting. However, he did take her case and saw it through for seven years.

Having run the gamut of the state courts, in 1925 the case of Anita Whitney was argued before the United States Supreme Court. On October 18, 1925, the Supreme Court resorted to the same subterfuge it used in the Sacco-Vanzetti case; it dismissed the appeal for want of jurisdiction.

Anita was then in Carmel and a reporter for The Oakland Tribune first brought her the news that her final appeal had been rejected. The reporter acknowledged that she received the news "calmly and with practically no trace of emotion." Questioned about a pardon, now seemingly the sole means of escaping from one to fourteen

years in San Quentin, Anita replied, "I shall not ask for a pardon. How can I be pardoned for doing right?"

Her comment on the court's ruling was:

"Two years ago the state supreme court ruled in the case of Ben Bigelow. I do not see how the court could have ruled differently in my case. If Ben Bigelow, a poor man, is sent to prison, the court could not decide in my favor because I am a club woman and have influential friends.

"I do not believe in class. It is against my principles to receive any advantage that money or special privilege are supposed to give. If it is right for Ben Bigelow to go to prison for making speeches against the criminal syndicalism law, then it is right for Anita Whitney to go for the same offense. If Ben Bigelow has not the right of free speech in a supposedly free country, then Anita Whitney has not. These are the principles which have actuated my life. . . ."

The next act was summarized in *The New York World* of October 22, 1925, with these headlines:

WON'T ASK PARDON,
CELL IS CERTAINTY
FOR MISS WHITNEY

Her Refusal To Sign Petition To
Governor Sweeps Away Last
Hope of Escaping Term

Executive Will Not Act
Until She Makes Appeal

The story, a special dispatch, featured on page one, read:

"SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 21.—Charlotte Anita Whitney, woman of wealth and former social leader, today brushed aside her last hope of escaping a penitentiary sentence of one to fourteen years for violation of California's criminal syndicalism law.

"Following an announcement by Gov. F. W. Richardson that it would be impossible for him to act on a pardon for Miss Whitney until a formal petition signed by herself had been presented to him, the convicted woman announced in her Oakland home that she would never ask for a pardon."

Governor Friend W. Richardson's first alibi for not issuing a pardon was Anita's refusal to request one. But with an executive pardon the only visible means for saving Anita from prison, a new movement, even broader in scope than the one which rallied to her side in 1920, came into being. An Anita Whitney Committee was formed in October, 1925, and its roster included Warren Olney, former state supreme court justice; Bishop Edward L. Parsons; William Kehoe, the former state senator who introduced the criminal syndicalism law; William Humphrey, president of the Olympic Club; Dr. Aurelia H. Reinhardt, Mills College president; O. K. McMurray, dean of the University of California Law College; Mrs. Parker S. Maddux, chairman, Republican Women's Committee; Mrs. Gaillard Stoney, chairman, Democratic Women's Committee; Dr. Jessica Peixotto, economics professor, University of California; Mrs. Alfred McLaughlin, director of the social and health agencies, San

Francisco Community Chest; Mrs. S. G. Chapman, president, National League for Women's Services; former United States Senator James D. Phelan; Chester Rowell; John F. Neylan, publisher, San Francisco Call; Charles S. Stanton, publisher, San Francisco Bulletin; P. C. Edwards of San Diego, editor-in-chief, Scripps-Howard newspapers of California; Paul Scharrenberg, secretary, State Federation of Labor, and Max L. Rosenberg, fruit packer.

Leading representatives of the Catholic hierarchy stood by their support of Anita Whitney. The Very Rev. Monsignor Rogers, rector of St. Patrick's Church, San Francisco, in signing a pardon petition, said: "I deem the law under which Miss Whitney was convicted a monstrous violation of the personal liberties of a citizen. It was born in the insensate madness of the war days, and is calculated, in my opinion, to rob the nation of the loyalty and devotion of its best citizens." On November 11, Archbishop Hanna, just returned to San Francisco from a pilgrimage to Rome, told the press in his first interview: "I feel very strongly that Miss Anita Whitney, who is facing a long jail sentence as a criminal syndicalist, should be given by Governor Richardson a prompt and unconditional pardon." The Archbishop was all aglow with what he termed "a marvelous demonstration of the spiritual impulse of mankind that I witnessed on this visit to Rome . . ." As a result, he added, "The case of Miss Whitney, as well as other important public issues, appear to me at this moment particularly in a spiritual and idealistic light."

San Francisco's District Attorney Matthew Brady turned to scriptures, saying, "A Roman governor tortured and crucified under the criminal syndicalism laws of those

days, the gentle, humanity-loving Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

"It should be the prayer of every liberty-loving person that the governor of the enlightened commonwealth of California will not follow the example of Pontius Pilate by further torturing Miss Anita Whitney, convicted under the criminal syndicalism laws of today."

George Sterling, San Francisco's romantic poet laureate, was moved to write three sonnets addressed to Governor Richardson, under the title, "Does Mercy Abide Within the Heart of Man?" The last two read:

2

*Mercy abides within the heart of man,
And power to pardon has been given you,
Lest wrong to wrong unalterably accrue,
Injustice ending what the law began.
Is it so deep and wide a gulf to span
That we, with sight as clear as yours, should sue
For clemency to one so brave and true,
But find you Mammon's eager partisan?*

*She is most innocent. She did no wrong
But in her calm defiance of the strong,
Whose hearts were set on war as hers on peace.
Answer: whose footsteps has she followed in—
Those of the Prince of Love or Lord of sin?
Beyond what portals shall her footsteps cease?*

3

*Say not the law has judged; you judge as well.
Say not you save a people from the threat
Of crime unpunished: mercy shall beget
Mercy in turn, such is compassion's spell.
What gain is there if bigotry impel
The heart of Justice on injustice set?
Often have tyrants seen, in late regret,
How they have made a temple of a cell.*

*The base and cruel hold alone in awe
The words of California's idiot law,
And justice less than mercy now we ask.
Under the blaze of future freedom's light,
How shall you stand dishonored in man's sight
Who set the jailer to his monstrous task!*

The labor movement voiced its plea in the more prosaic form of resolutions passed by the San Francisco and Los Angeles Central Labor Councils. The Negro people said it with petitions, and Wesley C. Peoples, secretary of the Negro Progressive Club, announced that 5000 signatures had been gathered among the Negro people, 1600 in San Francisco alone. The Berkeley Society of Friends, Quakers, the denomination in which the governor had been reared, also appealed to him for a pardon.

Late in November, the Young Ladies Institute, representing 1200 young women, addressed this tender entreaty: "We . . . pray that you will exercise your benign

prerogative as governor in her behalf; thus in the holy season of peace and good will bring happiness not merely to one, but to a multitude of your devoted and loyal adherents."

The case now became a national issue. The New York World editorialized: "Our liberties are at a low ebb indeed if such a thing can come to pass in an American state." The St. Louis Post Dispatch commented on "how ridiculous" California will appear "if Governor Richardson permits Charlotte Anita Whitney to become a martyr for the sake of free speech and unshackled political opinion." In a much lighter vein, under the heading, "How To Keep Out of the Penitentiary," The Post Dispatch wrote:

"To those who would avoid the fate of Charlotte A. Whitney, now on her way to a penitentiary for having political opinions contrary to the lawmakers of California, we would suggest the following simple rules:

"1. Don't swear at Coolidge in public.

"2. Don't read such revolutionary documents as the Declaration of Independence.

"3. Be courteous to your Congressman, tip your hat to your Senator.

"4. When you see a policeman coming, cross the street. You may be suspect.

"5. Don't have any opinions about government affairs.

"6. Keep off the grass."

But neither scorn nor ridicule, nor the poetry of Sterling, the supplications of prelates, the tender entreaties of young ladies, the resolutions of the labor movement, the petitions of the Negro people, nor the appeals of some of the state's most prominent citizens could move

the tory heart of Friend W. Richardson. In an exchange of letters with Upton Sinclair, widely publicized throughout the state, the governor contemptuously dismissed this mass demand with the arrogant statement: "I will not issue pardons merely because of popular clamor." This autocratic arrogance aroused even greater indignation and on November 28, 1925, the governor felt it necessary to issue a laborious and tortured statement, covering thirteen printed pages, explaining his refusal to pardon.

Seemingly, the end had been reached. Prison was inevitable—then, on December 14, the United States Supreme Court agreed to a rehearing on an amended petition by John Francis Neylan. The amended appeal challenged the constitutionality of the criminal syndicalism law on the grounds that the state legislature had violated the prerogative of the Federal Congress in legislating on matters pertaining to the national security, and that the law was in violation of the 14th amendment to the constitution which provides that "no State shall make or enforce any laws which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States."

A year and a half later, on May 15, 1927, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the criminal syndicalism law in a unanimous opinion. Justices Brandeis and Holmes, while concurring in the opinion, added this qualification:

"Whether in 1918, when Miss Whitney did the things complained of, there was in California such clear and present danger of serious evil might have been made the important issue in the case. . . . She claimed below that the statute as applied to her violated the Federal Constitution; but she did not claim it was void because there

was no clear and present danger of serious evil, nor did she request that the existence of these conditions of a valid measure thus restricting the rights of free speech and assembly be passed upon by the court or a jury."

This was a statement of the famous juridical theory that abridgment of constitutional guarantees, such as free speech and free assembly, is valid only if the existence of "clear and present danger" to the state and the public safety makes such abridgment necessary. In Anita's case, the qualification of Brandeis and Holmes was tantamount to saying that had her attorneys employed the correct arguments, she might have been freed, but since her attorneys miscued, she must forfeit one to fourteen years of her life. The issue of her specific guilt or innocence or the justice of her imprisonment somehow got lost in the twisted maze of legal ritual.

XIII

Again all seemed lost. The nation's highest tribunal had ruled with the irrevocable finality given it. But a strange thing came to pass, something foreseen by Gene Debs, wise with the wisdom of class instinct. In 1925, when others had lost hope, Debs, then old and ailing, but still retaining the rhetoric of the old orator, thundered:

"Anita Whitney will not go to prison."

"The miserable cowards and poltroons who are responsible for her conviction dare not put her there. Not that there is any pity or mercy in their flint hearts or their bowels of brass, but because, blind, stupid and callous as they are, they realize that there is such a thing as going too far. . . ."

If—Debs added—"if the impossible should come to pass; if the Chambers of Commerce and their 'constituted authorities' should be so low and vile enough to allow such a crowning disgrace to come upon the state already so notoriously sodden in plutocratic misrule in the eyes of the world; and if the people of that state tamely, supinely, shamelessly see Anita Whitney, white-souled apostle of the dawn, flung into that rotten dungeon, that unspeakably vile, festering black hole of capitalism, reeking with leprosy and abomination at every pore, then should all the lightning of infinite wrath be let loose at once as upon ancient Sodom and Gomorrah . . . for such a state is not morally fit to survive in even a half-civilized world."

Debs' first impulse was soundest. Now, the rulers of California, they who had remained silent for all the past seven years, stepped forward and in all their majesty requested a pardon for Anita Whitney. Now, a list of those supporting a pardon plea read like a collection of gilt edged plates taken from the doors of San Francisco's mightiest institutions of finance. There was William H. Crocker, the financier and national Republican committeeman; Herbert Fleishhacker, president of what was then called the Anglo and London Paris National Bank; H. M. Storey, vice president of Standard Oil of California; R. I. Bentley, president of the California Packing Corporation; Philip Fay, president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce; George Cameron, publisher of The San Francisco Chronicle; Oscar Sutro, attorney for Standard Oil, and Louis Lurie, the politically influential capitalist.

When the Sutros and Crockers and Fleishhackers spoke,

their political lackeys echoed in chorus. Now, Senator Hiram Johnson blustered, "Were I Governor, I would pardon her at once." State Controller Ray L. Riley, that old Republican hack who was described in the press as "a conservative government officer with the business man's viewpoint," ventured his predigested judgment that Anita should be pardoned. Congresswoman Florence Kahn, Mayor John L. Davie of Oakland, the entire San Francisco delegation to the state legislature, all, without exception, spoke up now that Standard Oil, Calpak, the Crocker and Fleishhacker banks had spoken.

Now, Walter J. Peterson, an executive of the Ship-owners Association in San Francisco, who had been captain of detectives in Oakland in 1919 and hence nominally in charge of the detail which arrested Anita, dared to say publicly what he had been saying in private all these years. He said that her arrest was a mistake.

"I investigated Anita Whitney's record in 1919," he went on. "I found that she had always done an enormous amount of good in the community. I wasn't in sympathy with her pacifist ideas and a lot of her other notions. But I recognized that it wasn't in her nature to commit violence or to encourage it. She was one of those idealists who want to make the world better for everyone. I ordered Fenton Thompson not to arrest her. But he was so zealous he went over my head to Commissioner J. F. Morse and the arrest was made. No constructive good can be done by making a martyr of Anita Whitney. She should never have been held to answer in the first place."

On June 20, 1927, Governor C. C. Young issued a pardon to Anita Whitney. In his opinion, devoted mostly to Anita's character and the unusual circumstances which

surrounded her trial, the governor also said it was his belief that "the criminal syndicalism act was primarily intended to apply to organizations actually known as advocates of violence, terrorism, or sabotage, rather than to such organizations as a Communist Labor Party."

The governor's reference to organizations "known as advocates of violence" was an intended slap at the IWW, an attempt to justify failure to pardon IWW members still in prison at the time.

On July 7, 1927, Anita celebrated her sixtieth birthday, the first birthday in seven when the threat of a penitentiary sentence did not hang over her head.

In Massachusetts, the rulers with "flint hearts and bowels of brass" insisted that Sacco and Vanzetti must die. Even as Anita was pardoned the date for the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti had been set for July 10. It was to them her heart went out. A month earlier, when the Supreme Court had ruled against her, she dismissed that ruling, ". . . in any event, I am of slight importance. Compared with the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, whose lives are at stake, my little trouble is of little importance." Without mercy and without pity, California's rulers had flinched. Not those of Massachusetts. They burned to death the immigrant fish peddler and shoe maker.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FORMATIVE YEARS

I

The years 1921-29, their illusions of permanent prosperity based on the Ford myth in economic theory and sane Republicanism in political practice, have already taken on the semblance of a strange interlude in the continuity of American history. The reigning reaction and cynicism, the chimera of Coolidge prosperity and the demoralization of the labor movement, brought on by the successful open shop drive in the postwar period and the passivity of the official labor leadership, all served to create an environment hardly receptive to Communist ideas, and for the Communist movement those were formative, painful years.

The shock of the first wave of mass persecution in 1919 and 1920 had left the party a small organization, largely divorced from the main streams of American life, its sectarianism heightened by the very severity of the struggle for survival. One of its initial difficulties, its twin birth, was overcome when the "Communist Party" and the "Communist Labor Party" merged to form what was called the Workers Party of America in 1921.

In California, the arrest of the entire Oakland group of founding fathers disrupted the party organization at the very outset. Yet, as elsewhere throughout the country, it remained an organized force with amazing tenacity and persistence. The party organ, *The World*, was renamed *The Western Worker* in January, 1920, and managed to survive until September, 1921, under the continued editorship of J. E. Snyder. Party organizations were established and maintained in Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles and some of the rural communities.

For a time, during that period, Anita was compelled virtually to sever active connections with the party. Her case was still dragging through the state courts, and she was a marked woman. Detectives shadowed her wherever she went, her mail was opened, and it was deemed advisable that she not attend any party meeting lest the police trail her and raid the meeting. On one occasion a reporter and an acquaintance both warned her that the police were plotting a frameup. According to their story, and she had every reason to believe it reliable, the police planned to lure her into an automobile driven by a provocateur who would take her to a "disorderly house" which then would be raided. The acquaintance who warned her of this scheme said he had been offered the role of provocateur in payment for which an indictment against him would be dropped.

In the middle twenties, the Communists established their first contacts among the agricultural workers, particularly in the Salinas Valley among Filipino field hands. On one occasion, party headquarters received a call from a Spanish comrade who operated a gas station near San Jose. Five hundred pea pickers, mostly Mexican, had

walked out in a spontaneous strike at Castroville in a dispute over wages and the foreman's practice of pressing the peas down into the basket with his foot when payment was on the basis of the number of baskets picked. The strike leader had been jailed and the workers needed help, the Spanish comrade said. A party organizer hurried down to the scene of the strike, and was admitted into the jail to see the strike leader, and was met with a warm handclasp that denoted familiarity.

"I know you. You're a Communist organizer," said the strike leader.

"How do you know?"

"I hear you speak in San Jose, in the park."

The party had been holding regular Sunday meetings in the park at San Jose, and that is how many of the field workers had come to know it. Through the party's efforts the strike was spread to include Filipinos, picket lines were established for a radius of fifty miles, and the workers won some of their demands.

The party enjoyed considerable influence among the Filipinos. It held meetings with them in the valley, and its spokesmen were invited to address celebrations on Rizal Day, national patriotic holiday of the Filipinos.

At about the turn of the decade, there were anti-Filipino riots, inspired by the growers, in the Salinas region. The situation was extremely tense. State police patrolled the highways, reinforcing the vigilante rule. The party decided to issue a leaflet to the workers of the valley, explaining to them that racial strife was injurious to their interests, served to disunite them and make it easier for the growers to slash wages and worsen conditions. Distribution of the leaflets was no simple matter for virtual

martial law reigned in the affected areas. When asked, Anita readily volunteered to drive her car into the Salinas Valley with a group of comrades to get the leaflets to the workers. On one occasion, the car was stopped by a highway patrolman, and it was a tense moment for the car's occupants for they all knew that if the leaflets were found, it meant trial before a kangaroo court and almost certain imprisonment at the very least. However, Anita's demeanor and appearance were so disarming that the officer allowed the car to proceed without any search. The leaflets were distributed and many of the workers were so responsive that they volunteered their pennies and dimes to the distributors.

Anita's activities, however, were centered chiefly in the Negro community of West Oakland during those years, and she was instrumental in obtaining Fraternity Hall, located on Seventh street, near the outskirts of the Negro district, as the first Oakland headquarters of the Workers Party after it had emerged from semi-legality. Almost solely through her own energies, she later opened a Workers Bookshop on Telegraph avenue in downtown Oakland, the first such bookshop in that city since the formation of the Communist Party, and possibly the first such bookshop along the entire Pacific Coast. Despite the fact that her case was still dragging through the courts and had become a national issue, Anita, with characteristic modesty and patience and tireless energy, did Jimmy Higgins work in West Oakland. The small trim figure of this woman, now in her late fifties, trudging through the dreary streets, stopping at the wooden frame houses with their nondescript mouse-like grey color to leave a leaflet

or deliver a personal message with simple and earnest eloquence, became a familiar sight in West Oakland.

Her broader interests centered on strike relief and the defense of labor's men victimized because of their activities in behalf of the working class. In pursuit of this latter interest, she went on frequent trips to San Quentin and there formed lifelong friendships with Tom Mooney and particularly J. B. McNamara. Of all the people outside the prison walls, Anita Whitney shared with William Z. Foster the rare honor of being regarded with the warmest affection, the strongest feeling of comradeship by J. B. McNamara. They were a strange trio, so different in background and life's experience, yet bound by the tie of comradeship and a common nobility of character. Foster, who had done more than any other one person, to keep alive the fight for McNamara's freedom, never came to California without visiting J. B., and, whenever possible, Anita accompanied him on those visits. Not long before McNamara's death in 1941, Foster and Anita visited him at Folsom. When they came out of the prison, Foster, fatigued by the hot Sacramento Valley sun, paused, and leaning against the wall, his hat off, and mopping his brow, softly exclaimed, "Anita, he is magnificent. He has a magnificent soul."

"Yes, he is," Anita replied simply. "So are you. You have the same qualities."

Anita regarded J. B. with deep reverence as did hundreds of others who had come to know him even slightly. In all the years of their friendship, McNamara never once asked for a personal favor, although he often asked favors for others. McNamara's steadfastness, his iron will, his uncompromising devotion to principle and deep faith in

the working class which grew and deepened during thirty years of imprisonment were for Anita guiding stars, models to which she aspired, and with greater success than she would concede.

In 1928 Anita for the first time became the standard bearer of her party in a statewide election. She was nominated for United States Senator and although the party was not on the ballot, she went on the first of her election tours of the state, reaching into communities where hitherto Communists had never spoken from a public platform. One experience of that campaign impressed her most. While she was in Los Angeles, a Negro comrade named Owens requested that she come to Blythe in the Palos Verdes Valley, a cotton growing region near the Arizona border, where a large Negro population was aroused by the segregation of Negro children in the schools. Anita gladly agreed for it was the sort of issue to which she responded rapidly, and she enjoyed going to outlying districts, far removed from the large cities where the Communists had their greatest strength. She arrived in Blythe on Sunday afternoon and attended a Negro community meeting where a defeatist attitude was prevalent, and the dominant sentiment seemed to favor abandonment of the fight against segregation. Both Owens and Anita spoke, urging that the fight be revived and waged with greater vigor. A Baptist minister present was so impressed by Anita that he invited her to address his congregation that evening. She did, and helped inspire a renewed struggle which culminated in the defeat of segregation.

That year, too, Anita was elected a delegate to the national nominating convention of the Communist Party

in New York, the first of the many national Communist gatherings she was to attend.

II

The Coolidge prosperity era attained its peak in 1927, a banal year whose measure of success was indicated by such phenomena as Babe Ruth's all time record of 61 home runs during the baseball season, the only million dollar gates in boxing history when Gene Tunney and Jack Dempsey met in two matches, Ziegfeld's three shows on Broadway and Texas Guinan's night club eminence.

In 1927, too, on August 22, Sacco and Vanzetti were executed. The tragedy in the death house at Boston was the reality which cast its shadow over the banality of the period. That shadow found its expression in newspaper headlines in August:

FOREIGN BORN RADICALS WARNED BY
CONGRESSMEN NOT TO STIR ROW

BOMB MAY BE LINKED WITH REDS

14,000 POLICE KEEP NEW YORK VIGIL

MOB OF 4,000 LED
BY SCHOOL GIRL, 16,
BATTLE CHICAGO POLICE

RED ROUNDUP TO FOLLOW SACCO MEETINGS;
BOSTON POLICE BATTLE 10,000 IN SACCO RIOT

A feeling of the world-wide scope of the protest movement may be gotten from the following items gathered at random:

BUCHAREST—Resolutions against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti adopted at mass meetings in many Rumanian cities and sent to American Minister W. S. Culbertson.

BUENOS AIRES—Workmen back at work after a three-day general strike against the Sacco-Vanzetti executions.

LONDON—Thirty-five were injured as thousands in this city stormed the United States Embassy in protest against the Sacco-Vanzetti execution. It was the worst disorder in England since the General Strike. A mass meeting of 10,000 was held in Hyde Park.

ROME—The Italian capital was under guard.

ATHENS—U. S. buildings have been placed under special guard.

STOCKHOLM—Swedish workers engaged in protest strikes.

OSLO—A five-minute stoppage of work throughout the Norwegian capital was reported.

HELSINGFORS—A boycott of United States goods has been voted by Finnish labor unions.

Warsaw, Hamburg, Paris, Berlin, Leipzig, Mexico City, Moscow, Lisbon, Johannesburg—all these cities and others were astir. The world was angry. Two innocent men were going to their death, pushed inexorably by an inhuman autocracy, by the prejudice and reaction of capital and its institutions bent on this monstrously conspicuous demonstration of their ruthless power. Here was injustice. This was no slip, no mistake, no miscarriage, as the

phrase runs. It was willful, deliberate. And the world cried out in protest. In America, all the popular impulses, the democratic precepts which survived the corruption of the Coolidge era welled up against this terrible crime.

With all her passionate hatred for injustice, Anita plunged into this movement for Sacco and Vanzetti. She spoke at mass meetings, organized the dispatch of protests to Governor Fuller of Massachusetts, she talked and worked and felt the terrible frustration of knowing that the efforts expended did not match in magnitude the monstrosity of the crime being contemplated by the rulers of Massachusetts. In the eyes of the labor movement, her very name and person became associated with the battle for liberation of Sacco and Vanzetti. In Alameda County, there had been formed an Anita Whitney Conference, representative of some 30 AFL unions, to take up the fight for her freedom when she faced prison in the criminal syndicalism case. After Governor Young granted her a pardon, the unions constituted themselves a Sacco-Vanzetti conference to campaign for their release. On the night of execution, she spoke to the women's auxiliary of the AFL Carpenters Union in Oakland and the men adjourned their own meeting early to join the women. To the very last they hoped against hope that somehow, by some miracle, the news would be flashed that the execution had been put off. Finally, they stood in silent tribute to the two martyrs, those truly noble spirits whose names will long survive those of their jailers and hangmen.

In San Francisco on August 22, a crowd of 15,000 persons gathered at a protest demonstration in Civic Center at the call of the Communist Party and the International Labor Defense. City Hall resembled an armed fortress.

Machine guns were mounted on top of the building and at the windows. Police and plainclothes men were in evidence everywhere. When two husky demonstrators lifted a woman speaker on their shoulders, she had but the opportunity to shout, "Fellow workers—", when the police attacked and broke up the meeting. The crowd then surged to the rear of 1212 Market Street, which faced the Civic Center, and was addressed by orators who spoke from the windows of the Communist headquarters then located in that building. After a brief meeting, the throng was urged to proceed down Market Street, and some 2000 had joined the rapidly swelling columns by the time they reached Third and Market. Here, another meeting was held and then the crowd was called on to march to Garibaldi Hall on Broadway in North Beach. The columns formed and headed up Kearny street, but as they came abreast of the Hall of Justice, they ran into a cordon of motorcycle police stretched across the street. The head of the column was steered into Washington street, and then into the basement of the Hall of Justice, and 127 persons were thus corralled and jailed. The following day all those arrested were given suspended six-month sentences.

The militant spirit and the size of the demonstration were unprecedented in San Francisco, and the leadership of some 75 Communists who managed to organize this expression of the profound protest movement evoked by the Sacco-Vanzetti case, marked a high point in the development of the Communist movement in California.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GREAT CRISIS

I

In American history, 1929 will be remembered as the year of the Great Crash which ushered in the Great Crisis. The capitalists and their faithful spokesman, President Herbert Hoover, treated the economic crisis as if it were some foreign state; they refused to extend diplomatic recognition to it. With the logic of the ostrich, that rare bird whose strange behaviour is the practical summation of all idealistic philosophy, Hoover denied the existence of the crisis. He denied the existence of unemployment, of suffering. The press and other avenues of public information joined in a conspiracy of silence to ignore the hard facts of economic life. The government refused to meet the responsibilities of unemployment simply by denying its existence.

It was then that the Communist Party made its mass debut in American political life. It organized and led the great nation-wide unemployment demonstration of March 6, 1930, when a million and a quarter workers answered the call of the Communists and demonstrated to all America the unpleasant fact that unemployment

did exist, that untold hardships did warp the lives of millions of Americans. In New York, 110,000 persons demonstrated in Union Square. The police attacked the demonstrators, mounted officers and police riot wagons rode through the great mass of people jammed into the square, injuring hundreds. William Z. Foster, Robert Minor, Israel Amter and Harry Raymond were arrested after the demonstration and served a minimum of six months in jail. In Detroit, 100,000 demonstrated. In every large city of America, in hundreds of industrial towns, thousands responded. The authorities expressed their fear of this demonstrative upsurge among the workers in tremendous mobilizations of police and other armed forces, and in scores of cities these forces were used to attack the jobless. The demonstration achieved its purpose. It projected unemployment as the primary issue in American politics, and there it was to remain for the next five years.

In San Francisco, there was no violence on March 6 for the simple reason that the police did not attack the demonstration of 12,000 persons. The newspapers were very smug about it, as if somehow Mayor Rolph had outwitted the unemployed by not ordering the police to bash their skulls in with nightsticks. The San Francisco Examiner sneered, "Although paraders carried banners denouncing the government and the police, and some frankly longed for the martyrdom of cracked skulls and imprisonment, they met with nothing but courtesy and gentle treatment." The Examiner may have sneered, but hundreds of workers did not. They flocked into Communist headquarters at 145 Turk street, seeking admission into the party.

From then on, until the middle of 1933 the struggles and organization of the unemployed occupied the party's major attention in California as throughout the country. These struggles assumed mass demonstrative forms, and were the most dramatic expression of any wide movement among the people. Two state hunger marches were organized in January of 1932 and 1933. Numerous demonstrations were held in the separate localities of the state. Tens of thousands of persons participated in these actions, and thanks to their organization and militancy, given leadership by the Communists, the principle that hunger is a social concern was established. These struggles wrested the first relief concessions from the local governments, then moved on to securing relief from the state, and finally laid the foundation for the New Deal measures of social security and relief.

During these turbulent years, Anita Whitney resided in Oakland, devoted her energies to the International Labor Defense and the many Jimmy Higgins jobs of a good Communist. In the ILD she was associated with Ella Reeve "Mother" Bloor who had been sent to California by the national ILD office as a field representative, and Mrs. Warwick, then Alameda County ILD secretary. All three women were in their sixties and Anita was the youngest of the trio, Mother Bloor being her senior by five years and Mrs. Warwick by two. Both her partners were old friends. Anita first met Mrs. Warwick at the Loring Hall convention which founded the Communist Labor Party in California, and became acquainted with Mother Bloor in the early twenties when the latter was dispatched to California as the first national representative of the Workers Party. The three women worked

closely together, and developed a comradeship which went far beyond the formal associations in common political activity.

Those were busy years for the ILD. There were scores of arrests of Communists and other militants in California, most notably the Imperial Valley criminal syndicalism case in the late twenties and early thirties. In those years, the ILD interceded nationally in behalf of the Scottsboro Boys and Angelo Herndon. Anita worked with her customary selfless devotion, particularly in behalf of Herndon and the Scottsboro Boys and regards as the high point of that period of her activity the huge mass meeting in Oakland for one of the Scottsboro mothers. Locally, she helped raise funds and bail for those arrested. Only at rare and brief intervals was her modest property not tied up in bail commitments. This activity of hers frequently kept her on the sidelines as a reserve during the more demonstrative actions of the party. For example, in one of the early unemployed demonstrations, she was ordered to stay away so that in event of arrests she could help raise bail for those jailed.

With her comrades, she regularly trudged down to the Southern Pacific and Key System railroad shops early in the morning to distribute leaflets. She spoke at noon-day factory gate meetings before the cotton mills. She also soap-boxed at 10th and Broadway, the only corner where the police allowed the Communists to hold street meetings in Oakland then.

She collected signatures to place the Communist Party on the ballot in California. More than 33,000 signatures were collected throughout the state, although only 14,500 were required by law. Yet, in San Francisco, reputedly

at the instigation of Cameron King, deputy registrar of voters and still a Socialist, the election petitions were thrown out and the party was kept off the ballot in 1932.

William Z. Foster, the Communist presidential candidate, came through California on a national speaking tour and was everywhere greeted by large throngs. In Los Angeles, he was arrested while speaking to 5,000 persons who had gathered in the plaza to hear him; but mass protest, in which Theodore Dreiser joined, won his release. In San Francisco, hundreds were turned away after 2,000 persons jammed Polk Hall at the Civic Auditorium. In Oakland, 1,000 heard him at the 12th Street Theater.

During 1932 Anita moved to San Francisco and was attached to the North Beach branch of the party. She recalls the branch with a wry smile. She was the only woman and only native-born person in it. The others were Chinese, Italian and Spanish or Mexican. They met in the small, crowded homes of the members. All of them were heavy smokers, and the mixed fragrance of Italian cigars, Bull Durham, an occasional "tailor made" cigarette, or a pipe filled the crowded room. Anita, who also had the distinction of being the only non-smoker, swears that at times the smoke was so thick she could not see the faces of her comrades. To make matters worse, the meetings dragged on interminably. If a report was delivered in English, a Chinese comrade would get up and apologize, stating it was necessary for him to translate the report into Chinese for those of his countrymen who could not understand English. An Italian usually followed, and then someone who spoke Spanish. The meeting thus lasted three times as long as that of an ordinary

branch, and an ordinary branch meeting generally lasted far into the night.

Anita spoke at the street meetings organized by the branch, and on one occasion had an unusual experience. She had delivered a brief speech from an improvised platform, in her usual calm and placid manner. A Spanish party member then mounted the platform to translate her speech, and launched into a typically fiery Latin oration. Anita listened amazed and shocked and wondering, "Could I really have said all that!"

II

In 1932, a new and reinvigorated movement for the freedom of Tom Mooney was ushered in by a huge meeting of 12,000 persons at Civic Auditorium in San Francisco, where Paul M. Calicotte "confessed" that it was he who placed the fatal Preparedness Day bomb. The meeting was organized officially by the Tom Mooney Molders Defense Committee, represented by Sam Goodwin, but heard such diverse speakers as Lincoln Steffens, Theodore Dreiser, Samuel Ornitz, Leo Gallagher, Irvin Goodman, and Sam Darcy, then state secretary of the Communist Party. The Communist participation in the meeting was dramatized by the entrance of 5,000 workers, including 1,500 from Alameda County, who marched into the auditorium in organized fashion, having previously been mobilized at street rallies of the Communist Party.

The movement quickly assumed a mass organized character and the following March, a meeting at the Civic Auditorium was sponsored by 74 organizations, including 36 AFL locals and seven other unions, two of which were

old established independent unions, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, Lodge 143, Oakland, and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Local 8, while the remainder were unions of the Trade Union Unity League.

During the initial stages of this movement, Anita still resided in Oakland, and she canvassed virtually every AFL union in that city, and proudly recalls that she was greeted with enthusiasm in all these unions, being excluded from but one.

III

Early in 1933, The Western Worker began to carry increasing references to strikes in the agricultural regions. A typical issue (April 17, 1933) had such stories scattered over the front page: "Pea Pickers Refuse To Work For 15c Per Hour; Many Join Union"; "Strawberry Workers in Southern California Plan Strike"; "East Bay Workers Fight Wage Cuts In Pea Fields"; "Jail Agricultural Workers in Effort To Stop Strike."

As more crops ripened, more such items appeared, and thousands of additional workers joined in the strikes which seemed to sprout with the inexorability of nature, just as the blossoms turned into fruit, and the seed in the ground bore fruition in the rich and diversified crops of California's fertile valleys. Peas and strawberries, lettuce, then raspberries and potatoes, then cherries, apricots, pears and peaches, tomatoes and chile, hops, grapes and, finally, cotton. From the Imperial Valley in the south, along the slopes of the mountains that descend to the seashore, up the rich San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys to the hardier

fruits of the northern end of the state, crops and revolt ripened in unison. And the revolt seemed to be motivated by forces as elemental as those which turned the dull brown of California's valleys into rich, lush green. Yes, the struggles were elemental. They were struggles to survive. Wages were below the minimum necessary to sustain life. They had been driven down to ten and fifteen cents an hour. In the early phases of the strike movement, the workers aspired to twenty-five cents an hour.

This strike movement reached its climax in October with the great cotton strike of 15,000 workers. The walk-out started in the Bakersfield area and swept northward with the ripening of the crop of over 100,000 acres of cotton. The growers, who increasingly had been resorting to terror to stem the strike wave, outdid themselves in the brutality with which they sought to break the cotton strikes.

The terror reached its tragic and bloody crescendo in the Pixley massacre. At Pixley, the workers had for days pleaded with the judge and sheriff to disarm the vigilantes lest bloodshed ensue. On the day of the massacre, a worker came to the court house, told the judge that armed men were in the vicinity and again pleaded that the authorities take some action. The judge refused, and even while the worker was remonstrating, another worker rushed in excitedly and said that armed vigilantes were moving into town. Sheriff Hill sent two officers out to investigate and they returned in fifteen minutes with seventeen men under arrest—all of them unarmed strikers, including the one who had come to the court house to warn the authorities.

While this was transpiring, a meeting of cotton strikers, addressed by Pat Chambers, president of the AWIU, was in progress at the square, some 100 feet down the street from the court house. When the meeting disbanded, some of the workers headed for the union hall across the street. Three armed vigilantes shouldered their way through the workers, and attempted to enter the hall. A Mexican worker, named Hernandez, seemingly fearing that the armed thugs had come to carry out the threat "to get" Chambers who had just entered the hall, blocked their way. He was knocked to the ground with the butt of a rifle, and as he fell the vigilantes pumped bullets into his body. Another Mexican, Davila, with arms upraised attempted to step in as a peace maker. He, too, was knocked to the ground and shot. The shots were a signal for the vigilantes who had massed on the other side of the street, and they opened fire indiscriminately into the ranks of the workers. Many were wounded, but only Hernandez and Davila were killed.

Despite this terror the strike ranks held and by the end of October, the growers began to settle for a rate of seventy-five cents a hundred pounds, a twenty-five per cent increase over what they had offered, although still short of the original strike demand for \$1 a hundred. The increase in wages, it was estimated, added a million dollars to the aggregate income of the cotton pickers. Among the ranchers who signed with the AWIU were such huge concerns as Miller and Lux and Buttonwillow.

During the strike, 101 workers were arrested, and even after the settlement, fifty-one still faced trial, most of them in jail. The courage of the Communists who bore the brunt of this terror, the self-sacrificing loyalty to the

movement of the organizers who entered the valleys without funds and carried on their activity often without food and lodging, won the admiration of thousands of California's most exploited and oppressed workers. The terror reign had its aftermath in 1934 and 1935 when eighteen workers were tried in Sacramento for criminal syndicalism, and several of them were sent to prison for terms ranging from one year upward.

Anita's efforts, through her association with the ILD, were centered on raising funds for the legal defense of the strikers, and relief for the strike kitchens. As the most famous of those who had been persecuted under the criminal syndicalism law, she actively engaged in the broad mass movement launched during those years for repeal of that law. Although the campaign did not succeed in its objective of repealing the law, it did score a major victory in a state supreme court decision reversing the convictions of all the Sacramento criminal syndicalism case defendants.

The agricultural strikes were overshadowed by the great industrial struggles of the following year and little attention has been given to their particular significance in the growth of the labor and progressive movement in California. Yet, these strikes, together with the unemployed movement, were the seed of the great upsurge of 1934 and thereafter. Three features of these strikes are particularly noteworthy:

1. Although the movement began before passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act, it was stimulated by NIRA's famous Section 7-a, which held forth the formal promise of the right to organize. The strikes represented the first mass dramatic response to NIRA in

California, and thus served to inspire a similar response in other industries.

2. They struck at the most powerful potential reserves of reaction in California. Agriculture was not only the state's largest industry; not only did it represent the greatest single concentration of capital, but this capital imposed such a rule upon the rural communities of California as to make them potential shock troops against labor. The strikes, therefore, were flank attacks against California capital, and when the maritime walkout came the following year, conditions in the valleys were still so unsettled, the great landowners were still so shaky that they were unable to use rural California as a battering ram against the industrial workers of the coast cities.

3. The strikes occurred just as the economic index was beginning to curve upward after having reached its depth in the summer of 1932. Many of the workers involved had been thrown out by industry and took to the fields in the hope of picking up a few dollars harvesting crops. With the further progress of recovery, these workers returned to industry, taking with them the militant traditions of struggle and organization acquired in the agricultural strike movement.

The Communist Party, because of its leadership in the unemployed and agricultural movements, registered its first decisive growth since its formation in 1919.

CHAPTER NINE

BEST KNOWN, MOST BELOVED

I

Anita Whitney's emergence as a public tribune of the Communist Party coincided with the party's own emergence as an important factor in the labor movement and political life of California. Both events, closely related, can be dated as beginning with 1934. The very date is significant, connoting as it does the fundamental truth that the growth of the Communist Party and its public figures proceeds in direct relationship with the growth of labor organization and the popular democratic mass movement among the people. The year 1934 marked a turning point not only for the Communist movement in California, not only for Anita as a representative of that movement, but also for labor and the progressive political currents in the state. These interrelated turning points were in turn related to great realignments then in process on a worldwide scale, setting into motion the greatest conflicts in world history.

For the labor movement, the year's high point was the maritime strike and the General Strike in San Francisco.

In the realm of politics, there was the EPIC movement which drew thousands of hitherto politically apathetic people into active political life and left as its heritage a strong progressive wing within the Democratic Party. This progressive wing, because of its grass roots origin, retained a popular mass character in following years which distinguished it from the progressive groupings in the Democratic Party of most other states.

The Communists had been among the pioneers in present day union organization on the Pacific Coast waterfronts. In the late twenties and early thirties, Communist seamen, working against great odds, between the hammer of police persecution and the anvil of starvation, helped establish and sustain organizations of seamen in San Pedro, San Francisco and Seattle. With the help of other militants, these organizations evolved into the Marine Workers Industrial Union.

The official AFL seamen's unions but skeletons which lived in the past, a past crowned by the shame of the 1921 strike betrayal, and their leaders passively accepting the shipowners' savage assault upon the living standards of the men aboard ship, the Marine Workers Industrial Union was the only force actively defending the interests of the seamen. It never grew into a mass organization, yet it exerted an influence far greater than its numbers and it did organize and lead sporadic strikes on individual ships and in individual companies. What was commonly believed to be the first sustained and organized struggle aboard a ship since 1923 was waged on the West Coast freighter Point Gorda of the old Swayne & Hoyt line in the fall of 1932.

In 1933, the advent of NRA stimulated the longshoremen to challenge the "Blue Book" company union which had held undisputed sway on the docks through every devious means of intimidation made possible by job control and the active assistance of the shipowners. The Communists and other militants among the seamen gave all the support they could to this revolt among the longshoremen, but the mainspring of the movement naturally came from among the longshoremen themselves. They organized into the AFL International Longshoremen's Association which had long been moribund on the Pacific Coast and managed to retain only a precarious toehold in one or two isolated ports of the Northwest. The influx of longshoremen into the ILA and the existence of a conscious, well-organized militant group in San Francisco, centered around *The Waterfront Worker*, a mimeographed publication, quickly transformed the character of the ILA. By the time the strike was called in the spring of 1934, the militancy and democratic spirit among the longshoremen, particularly in San Francisco, had reached such heights that the old line officials, including International President Joseph P. Ryan as well as his Pacific Coast henchmen, could no longer control the membership, and during the course of the strike itself, the rank and file established its own militant leadership, headed by Harry Bridges.

The vital role of the Communists in that strike was attested to by Bridges himself in his testimony before Dean James M. Landis during the first of his deportation hearings. The Communists helped rally public sympathy for the strikers, helped raise relief and provide legal defense. Through *The Western Worker*, which was

adopted as an official organ by the strike committee, and through individual Communists among the strikers, the party sought to project those policies which it believed would ensure victory. The Western Worker was the only newspaper which supported the strike, the Communist Party was the only organized political force to assist the strike, and the workers, engaged in a desperate battle, welcomed this aid. The prestige of the Communists in the labor movement generally, and among the maritime workers particularly, reached a high point. The Communist Party thereafter became a recognized factor on the waterfront whose opinion and advice was welcomed by thousands of workers as coming from a tested friend, one who had rallied to their side when they were in need. They remembered that one of the strike martyrs who gave his life's blood on Bloody Thursday was a Communist, Nick Bordoio.

Anita herself was in Berkeley, convalescing from an illness, when the strike broke out. As the situation grew more tense and the terror against the strikers and the Communists more acute, she returned to San Francisco to do what she could, although she was still feeble from her illness. Her home was used for some time as a liaison headquarters for the distribution of literature among the strikers and the workers of the city generally.

A rich anecdote growing out of the strike serves to cast Anita in an unusual light. The incident occurred after the General Strike had been called off and a wave of terror was directed against the Communists and other militants by armed vigilantes, aided by the police. Communist headquarters and the offices of The Western

Worker were smashed. Homes of individual Communists were raided, their occupants beaten and jailed. Anita's nephew, who lived in her home on Macondray Lane, was apprehensive lest their house be raided and his aunt beaten or jailed. He at first suggested that Anita leave town, but she would not hear of it. He then exacted from her a promise that she would place the chain latch over the door while he was away at work during the day. When he left for work, Anita kept her promise, chain latched the door. A short while later, the door bell rang. Anita opened the door the few inches which the chain latch permitted, and peered through to see a tiny and pitiful beggar woman who was peddling pencils. This experience shamed and humiliated her. "I, a free born American," she thought, "sitting in my own home behind a latched door!" It was too much, and she unlatched the door. However, she realized there was clear and present danger, and decided to find a weapon with which to protect herself against any unwelcome intruder. She found a cane, but that was too unwieldy. She then tried a fire poker but it was too heavy to be maneuvered with ease. Finally, she settled upon an empty milk bottle, and all day she went about her work, the milk bottle at her side, and when she answered the door bell, she opened the door wide, but the milk bottle was in her right hand.

II

With the entire state stirred by such events as the maritime strike and the EPIC upheaval, the Communist Party managed to get on the California election ballot

for the first time in its history. More than 31,000 signatures were collected on petitions to place the party on the ballot, although only 14,500 were required by law. This time, the political atmosphere in the state and country was such that the authorities did not dare reject the Communist petitions. An indication of the prevalent progressive spirit was the 242,313 votes secured by Leo Gallagher in the primaries, running with the Communist endorsement for a seat on the state supreme court.

Anita Whitney was nominated for state treasurer on the Communist Party ticket headed by Sam Darcy, candidate for governor. The party's campaign was directed chiefly against the Republican regime of Governor Merriam and its black record in dealing with the unemployed, its flagrant strike-breaking in the agricultural and maritime industries and the San Francisco General Strike. But the mass discontent, expressed most forcibly in the nationwide strike wave of 1934, found its chief political outlet in California in the rise of the EPIC (End Poverty In California) movement, led by Upton Sinclair, which captured the Democratic primaries and turned the party in a progressive direction.

The Communists criticized the EPIC platform for the petty-bourgeois Utopian illusions it created, but at the same time they later acknowledged their failure to appreciate sufficiently the character of EPIC as essentially a mass people's movement groping in a progressive direction. The basis for unity between the Communists and the EPIC movement was registered most clearly in the campaign and vote of Anita Whitney. Despite the party's criticism of the EPIC platform, many EPIC clubs endorsed her candidacy, and when the election results were

tallied, she had 100,820 votes, at least 90 per cent of them received from people who voted for Sinclair on the EPIC ticket.

Upton Sinclair was defeated in an historic campaign, unprecedented for its bitterness and the unprincipled use by the reactionaries of the "red scare" bogey to win the elections. The Communists corrected their previous estimation of the EPIC movement, and the antagonism between Communists and Epics was largely eliminated in the course of a number of united front campaigns on economic and political issues, in which Epics, progressive trade unions and the Communists participated. Large numbers of disillusioned Epics turned to the Communists for leadership and many joined the party.

Anita's vote, more than twice that of any other Communist candidate, legally qualified the party for a place on the ballot in the next state elections. Although some minor special circumstances attended her unusual vote, fundamentally it was a personal tribute, an indication of the prestige she enjoyed among thousands of Californians who regarded her as the best representative of the Communist Party, thousands who had come to admire her for her self-sacrificing work in the women's suffrage movement, in her efforts on behalf of the Negro people and the Irish liberation struggles; thousands of union men and women who had come to know her as a staunch champion of labor, thousands who admired her noble and courageous behaviour during the seven years that the shadow of a penitentiary sentence hung over her, and still other thousands who became acquainted with her in the course of her modest, patient and tireless activity as a

member of the Communist Party. Anita Whitney became recognized as the best known and most widely beloved of the Communist spokesmen in California, one whose life was associated with that which was finest and best in the state since the beginning of the century.

The party with which her name was now inseparably linked continued to grow and gain influence. Many hundreds swelled its ranks from among the Epics, the maritime and agricultural workers, and Socialists who became dismayed with the ruinous course of their party.

III

In 1934-35 the shadow of the coming war became the dominant fact in world politics. From its inception, the Communist Party had warned of the imminent danger of war in the making. For many years, it was virtually a lone voice, a harsh voice to those lulled by the idyllic pacifism of the Coolidge era. Beginning with 1929 and for several years thereafter, the Communists initiated international demonstrations against imperialist war on August 1, anniversary of the outbreak of the World War. Anita herself was jailed for picketing in connection with the first of these August 1 demonstrations. A newspaper photograph shows her marching, carrying a placard reading: "August First Is The International Day Against Imperialist War." Anita and others arrested with her received 30-day suspended sentences.

But after 1933, after the advent of Hitler to power, after the emergence of the Fascist bloc of powers intent on aggression, after these intentions materialized in the attack on Ethiopia and the rearmament of Nazi Germany,

the Communists were no longer a lone voice. Hundreds of millions of people throughout the world sensed the imminence of war and identified this menace with fascism. With these millions, the Communists made common cause. They worked to unite these millions around a common program of collective agreement among the democratic nations to halt the aggression of the Fascist Axis, and within each country to crush the Fascist reaction which was making a bid for power.

Within the United States the break between the Roosevelt Administration and the most reactionary forces within the country in 1935, symbolized by the formation of the Liberty League to fight the New Deal, and the withdrawal of support to the administration by such gentry as Charles E. Coughlin and William Randolph Hearst, created realignments wherein it became possible for the Communist Party to collaborate with the popular forces which gravitated around the New Deal. This collaboration reached its high point during the second Roosevelt term, beginning with 1937, when the administration opened its campaign for reform of the Supreme Court in the wake of such legislative enactments as the Social Security Law, the National Labor Relations Act, the Walsh-Healey Act, and still later, the Wages and Hours Law.

In California, the beneficent effects of the united front activities between the Communists and former Epics, who now formed a militant progressive wing within the Democratic Party, made themselves felt in the 1936 elections and bore their most fruitful results in the 1938 campaign. With the help of Earl Browder who in 1936 personally

visited Upton Sinclair and other old EPIC leaders, friendly relations were established between them and the Communists. Under the leadership of William Schneiderman, who had become Communist state secretary in 1935, and Anita Whitney, who became state chairman in 1936, the party maintained these relations and in 1938 its counsels helped dissuade some of the old Epics and other progressive Democrats from launching a premature third party movement. Thanks to the avoidance of a split, a progressive majority was formed in the Democratic Party and it swept the elections, ousting the Merriam regime and defeating the labor-crippling Initiative No. 1 which would have virtually outlawed unionism in California. The Communists projected before the masses the need for unity against the reaction centered around the Republican Party, and thus helped create the atmosphere in which the narrow and partisan considerations or personal attachments and ambitions of certain leaders in the progressive camp were swept aside by the elemental urge of the masses for unity. In this campaign, too, The People's World, a daily paper founded with the help of the Communists and other progressives in January, 1938, made its mass debut, and exerted some influence in the attainment of the progressive victory.

Anita Whitney was the party's standard bearer in the elections and polled 98,791 votes for the office of state controller, again securing enough votes to fulfill the legal requirements to retain the party on the ballot. By this time, Anita was not only state chairman of the Communist Party but also a member of the party's national committee. She campaigned throughout the state, bringing

the party's message of unity of labor and all progressive forces against the Fascist menace. She pleaded with all the eloquence at her command for mass petitions and protests to lift the embargo on democratic Spain, then fighting for its life, and to force a halt to the shameful shipments of scrap iron, oil and munitions to militarist Japan.

The crowning symbol of the progressive unity then achieved in California for a brief time and a source of great personal joy to Anita was the liberation of Tom Mooney in January, 1939. For her, who had taken up the fight for Mooney in 1916 and who personally experienced the same reactionary hysteria which was responsible for his imprisonment, his liberation not only culminated 22 years of consistent effort, but also was a token of hope, of victory in the wider goals she had set herself in life.

IV

It was a different sort of campaign in a different atmosphere that Anita waged in 1940. Her party was under attack, the subject of an unprecedented wave of slander, misrepresentation and vilification. As candidate for the United States Senate, she was the party's most prominent public champion against its enemies and their frenzied abuse. Just how successful a champion she was can be gauged by her vote. She received 97,478 votes, virtually the same number obtained in 1938. The vote was a popular demonstration of the fact that despite the orgy of red-baiting, masses of people retained their faith in Anita Whitney and the party she represented.

Anita's opponent was Hiram Johnson, the isolationist

appeaser. Anita assailed his anti-labor record, and drew the sharp contrast between the isolationist appeasers' espousal of a negotiated peace with Hitler, and the Communists' consistent anti-Fascist fight for a people's peace. Replying to those who had slandered the Communists and misrepresented their position on the war, she declared in a statewide broadcast in October, 1940:

"Our party is an American party, which makes its own decisions, and is not influenced or controlled by any foreign power. We stand for the defense of American democratic institutions, for the defense of our country and the interests of the American people."

To the red-baiters who said the Communists were fifth columnists and allies of Hitler, she scornfully replied:

"We have been fighting Hitler and Hitlerism long before some of these Republican and Democratic politicians found it has become fashionable to do so. Where were these great patriots when we Communists fought to save Spain and China from the Axis powers ever since 1936? Where were they when we fought against the Munich policy? Where were they when we were picketing Japanese ships that were picking up American oil and munitions to bombard Chinese women and children? If there is any fifth column in this country, you will find it in the ranks of the red-baiters."

Johnson was a fortunate opponent for he provided an opportunity for dramatizing the distinction between his bogus "isolationism" and the positive foreign policy advanced by the Communists, a policy based on an alliance of the United States, the Soviet Union and China.

"Such a constellation of powers, the United States, China and the Soviet Union, moving along agreed-upon

lines fully consistent with the needs of the three great peoples, would be very powerful indeed," said Earl Browder in a speech at Boston on October 6, 1940. "It would be a stable combination, for these countries have no rivalries of conflicting interests. It would be strategically powerful, because it would immediately hold the keys to three continents; a Washington-Moscow-Chungking bloc, solidly welded with correct policies, would be unmatched in world politics. It would be physically strong, combining seven hundred to eight hundred millions of population, and the preponderance of the world's productive forces. It would be morally invincible, attracting the enthusiastic adherence of the suffering people all over the globe."

The Communist belief was that this powerful combination, supported by the countries of Latin America and the peoples of all the world, presented the hope of preventing the evolution of the conflict into a world war, and offered the opportunity to use the balance of power it enjoyed to bring about a democratic, people's peace. Such an alliance did not come into being then, and the Soviet Union's involvement in the war removed the last hope that America could retain its democracy and independence by remaining aloof from the conflict. America could not withdraw into the shell of splendid isolation, while all the rest of the world was threatened by Hitler's conquest. The Soviet Union, with its powerful Red Army and its strategic position lying athwart Hitler's path through the Near East and Middle East to a juncture with his Japanese partners, had been the most powerful barrier between the United States and Axis aggression. When Hitler attempted to remove that barrier, he struck directly at

the national interests of the United States, and left but two paths open to the American people, either collaboration a la Vichy with him, or active alliance with the nations fighting to destroy the Hitler menace.

During 1940 Anita was the principal in an amusing incident which served to illustrate not only the Communist understanding of war, but also how far she had advanced from the semi-pacifist illusions which guided her outlook in the World War.

Anita and a party comrade had an appointment with several pacifist women. One of the pacifists remarked rather cynically that the Communists in weaving around had finally reverted to a point where they had a common meeting ground with the pacifists. Anita took offense at the cynicism, and launched into an explanation of the party's position on war, on the difference between just wars of a progressive character and unjust wars reactionary in nature. The pacifist was adamant, repeated again and again that all problems within the range of human experience can be solved without recourse to violence.

"Don't you think the American colonists were justified in taking up arms in the Revolutionary War?" Anita demanded.

"No, that could have been solved without violence."

"What about the Civil War? Don't you believe the North was justified?"

"Even that could have been solved without violence."

"What about the Chinese people then? Weren't they right in taking up arms to defend their land against the Japanese aggressors?"

"No. Even that could have been solved without violence."

Anita glanced downward. "I might have known it!" she exclaimed. "You are wearing silk stockings. A pacifist! You're just helping to pay for the bombs to wreck Chinese cities, kill and maim Chinese women and children."

With that she arose and walked out of the house. Her companion trailed after her, and when he came alongside, suggested, "Anita, don't you think we could have gone a bit easier on those people?"

"No," Anita replied, "there comes a time in any conversation when there is an end to it. And that was the end."

V

The year 1941, the 75th year of Anita's life, contained two dates which will forever loom large in world history, June 22 and December 7. Only five months intervened between that Sunday morning in early summer when Hitler's luftwaffe and panzer divisions struck across the Soviet border in treacherous attack and that other Sunday morning in late autumn when with equal stealth and treachery Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor. Actually, the dates are more closely related than even the short interval between them would indicate. They both denoted the desperate desire of the Fascist Axis to press for world conquest regardless of cost. June 22 ushered in the greatest crisis in contemporary history; December 7 was its inexorable echo. The world-wide war which was inevitable after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union became a grim reality in the death and wreckage wrought by Japanese bombs in Hawaii.

For Anita, the two dates are associated with two meetings of the national committee of the Communist Party where she participated in arriving at the most important decisions in the party's life. Only a week after Hitler's armies crossed the Soviet frontier, the Communist national committee was convened in plenary session. Out of its deliberations came a manifesto titled: "The People's Program of Struggle for the Defeat of Hitler and Hitlerism!" It addressed these bold clear words to the American people:

"The people of our country are facing a new world situation.

"Hitler fascism has brazenly attacked the Soviet Union. . . . This has immeasurably increased the menace of Hitler and fascism to the national existence of all peoples, to the social and national security of the people of the United States. The involvement of the Soviet Union in the war has changed the character of the war. The glorious and mighty defense by the Red Army and the united people of the Soviet Union, their valiant struggle to drive out and crush the aggressor, create the opportunity for the people of the United States and for all peoples to unite and assure the complete and final annihilation of Hitler and Hitlerism. . . .

"The defeat of Hitlerism, which means the defense of the liberty and independence of all nations, calls for the world-wide unity of all peoples in the struggle against Hitler fascism. . . .

"Organized labor and the whole working class are the sworn enemies of reaction, fascism and Hitlerism. In this new and critical world situation the working class

therefore faces the duty to assume leadership in the people's fight against the Fascist menace—in the fight to bring speedy and effective aid to the Soviet Union. It is the duty of the working class to lead the fight to establish American-Soviet-British collaboration for the defeat of Hitlerism and to make this the official and active policy of the government."

The manifesto concluded with such slogans as:

"Defend America by giving full aid to the Soviet Union, Great Britain and all nations who fight against Hitler!

"For full and unlimited collaboration of the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union to bring about the military defeat of fascism!

"For a government policy of democratic struggle against fascism!"

But a few days after Anita returned home from this meeting where she participated in the drafting of this historic manifesto, she was honored on the occasion of her seventy-fourth birthday. It was an inspired occasion, the audience of seven hundred who jammed the auditorium at Communist headquarters in San Francisco beyond capacity was enthused and excited by the great battle being waged by the Red Army against the Nazi invaders, by the knowledge that the Fascist reaction which had marched from victory to victory for more than a decade had now come to grips with a force which could stop it. And all the emotions evoked by that gigantic conflict were associated with this tribute to Anita, for to those present she was a living embodiment of those things for which Red Army men were fighting, bleeding,

dying. Those who spoke included William Z. Foster, the party's national chairman; William L. Patterson, the nationally known Negro leader with whom Anita had become acquainted during the war days when, as a youth, he spoke as a representative of the Negro people to a dinner of the Peace Council; Warren K. Billings, the veteran union man for whose freedom she had fought for twenty-two years, and Mrs. Nick Bordoio, widow of the Communist workman murdered by San Francisco police on Bloody Thursday in the maritime strike of 1934.

On December 7, Anita was in attendance at another plenary meeting of the Communist national committee. The discussion centered on how well the party had carried the June 29 manifesto to the people, how effectively it had helped to rally and organize sentiment behind the program of bringing the United States into a full partnership with Britain and the Soviet Union for the destruction of Hitlerism. There were reports from all sections of the country, reports of progress, reports of what still remained undone. The meeting was in its afternoon session and Anita's fellow national committee member from California, Steve Nelson, was in the chair. In the middle of the session, several of the party's leaders, some of whom had been seated on the stage, were called from the meeting room by whispered messages. In a few minutes they returned. William Z. Foster, his face grave and thought-laden, interrupted the speaker who had the floor, and announced in somber tones that news had just been flashed of a Japanese bombing attack on Pearl Harbor. To the hushed assembly, he underscored the serious implications of the news. Like all America, the meeting was shocked, tensed by the report. Those present realized

fully the gravity of the crisis facing the nation, the weight of the responsibilities which now evolved upon them as leaders of the Communist Party. On Foster's proposal a committee of five was chosen to draft a statement of policy. In a half hour, the committee returned with a short, concise, unequivocal declaration of the Communist attitude toward the new turn in the war.

That statement, as submitted by Robert Minor and adopted by the assembly, proclaimed the Communist Party's central slogans: "Everything for Victory Over World-Wide Fascist Slavery! Everything for National Unity!"

"Through the mouths of Japanese cannon, the Axis and its vassal states, from Vichy to Helsinki, have declared war against the United States and all powers that stand against enslavement. . . .

"Never in the history of our country has the need for unity of the Nation been so great as now. The Communist Party pledges its loyalty, its devoted labor and last drop of its blood in support of our country in this greatest of all the crises that ever threatened its existence. In the tradition of the Communist leaders who in 1861 joined the United States Army under commissions issued by President Lincoln, 100,000 American Communists today step forward to support the bigger war against slavery, a war in defense of the whole world's freedom. . . ."

The meeting was hastily completed, and the national committee members and other party leaders rushed back to their posts throughout the country to help weld the American people into a unified, invincible whole. By the time Anita returned to her home, San Francisco had experienced its first blackout. War tension was evident in

the city. California had been proclaimed a combat zone. Through the windows of her living room which overlook San Francisco Bay, Anita could see the Golden Gate and beyond, where American ships, within sight of the California coast, were sent to the bottom by Japanese submarines. She could see huge transports laden with uniformed American boys, gliding out of the harbor into the sunset whose golden hues animated the hills of Marin and transformed the Golden Gate Bridge into thin bracelet-like bands. Beyond the sunset was Pearl Harbor, Wake, Manila, Corregidor, outposts of America's Pacific frontier. . . .

"Everything for Victory!" It was an unequivocal slogan, and Anita sought to put it into life without equivocation. She went to her local fire house to register for civilian defense. She offered her services to the American Red Cross and the American Women's Volunteer Service. Everywhere, tacitly or openly, she was met with the story, "Too old." But Anita was not to be dismissed. The phrase "too old" is a challenge to her although she is modest about her own ability. She insisted that while young people were given more important tasks, there was something for her to do. And despite the apathy or red tape which met her, she finally found a job, winding surgical bandages for the Red Cross, and now, at 75, punctual and faithful, she appears at Red Cross headquarters weekly to wind bandages and discuss the issues of the war with her co-workers. Her home has been the block meeting place for the organization of air raid precautions, and the raid warden has consulted with her on the improvement of the work.

Most of all, her contributions to the war effort lie in

the leadership she gives to her party. With the same passion and unyielding attachment to principle that she once opposed American participation in the war of 1917, she now expends her energies to achieve victory in 1942. She understands that this war, to use Lenin's words, "notwithstanding all the horrors, cruelties, miseries and tortures, inevitably connected with every war, had a progressive character;" it "served the development of mankind, aiding in the destruction of extremely pernicious and reactionary institutions . . . helping to remove the most barbarous despotisms in Europe. . . ."

CHAPTER TEN

THE SECRET OF LEADERSHIP

I

At 75, Anita is a unique political leader. In 1940 when the Communist Party's national convention elected seventeen members to the national committee, Anita was one of the seventeen Communists in the United States honored with membership on the party's highest committee. That is a rare distinction. Communists are experienced organizers and political workers, people whose ability is heightened by singleness of purpose and absolute devotion to what they are doing. They have demonstrated their ability to move vast numbers of people, to help shape the political thinking of America despite their comparatively small numbers. Time and again, events have proven their farsightedness, their capacity for judging the course of history. They regard politics as a science and apply to it the critical exactitude of scientists. That is their strength. They combine self-sacrifice, devotion, loyalty and indefatigability with the most advanced thinking of mankind as summarized in the teachings of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin. To be a leader in such a party is no ordinary matter. Anita is such a leader.

What makes her a leader? The answer is complex. One cannot point to books she has written, political theories she has evolved, or any particular strategy or tactics she has innovated. The secret of her leadership lies in her person, in what she is, in what she has come to represent to thousands of her comrades, and many more thousands outside the ranks of her party. Hers is the rare quality of leadership by example. People not only follow her; more important, they are inspired to emulate her. There are people whom you have never seen, yet you have heard a great deal about them and unconsciously you create a mental portrait of them. Were you to be asked to describe the details which contributed toward that portrait, you would be at a loss. And yet, the very name of this person, who is actually unknown to you, connotes a picture which has all the force of reality. Anita is such a person, and an aura has been created around her, a legend all the more wonderful because it has such deep roots in reality. Her leadership is no formal process, it reaches into the lives of people, into their minds and hearts, and is manifested in all the varied and complex expressions of living itself.

In San Francisco's North Beach, an Italian worker, not a Communist, one who had never seen Anita, decided to name his daughter after her. In California's valleys, among the Mexican agricultural laborers, it is not uncommon to meet some little girl who answers to the name of Anita Ramirez or Anita Gomez. Among the Negro families of West Oakland or Bakersfield, there are Anita's namesakes. And if her name is remembered at the blessed event of birth, it is also remembered in the tragic eventuality of death. On one occasion, Anita was called by

an Oakland bank and was informed that some worker had just died, his name was unfamiliar to Anita, and he had his life's savings, some \$1,500, deposited in a joint account for himself and Anita. "The name Whitney is misspelled," the bank official explained, "but there is no doubt as to the intent of the deceased. The account now is solely in your name." On another occasion the Irish landlady of a rooming house called Anita. One of her roomers, an old German immigrant worker, seemingly alone in the world, had died. The landlady had no fixed ideas about the Communist Party or Anita Whitney, except that the roomer had talked constantly of both, and she was certain that his modest fortune, if any, must have been willed either to the party or Anita. At the bank where this old worker's savings were, a will, several years old, was found, leaving his meager funds to a niece in Stuttgart, Germany. The landlady was incensed at the thought of the money going to Hitler Germany, and she felt certain that a later will must have superceded that old one, but it never was discovered.

The ripening of California's diverse crops can be judged by the packages that arrive at Anita's home. Citrus fruits from the San Fernando Valley, apples from Eureka, plums and cherries from Santa Clara, peaches from the San Joaquin Valley, gifts from many admirers. On her speaking tours, too, she is showered with gifts, primitive and generous expressions of the warmth and affection with which she is regarded. Anita returns this affection and warmth with a remarkable sensitivity to the emotions of people, their inner thoughts and hopes.

Once she spoke in the town of Fort Bragg. One man arrived late at the meeting, and after it was over came

forward to apologize to Anita for his latecoming. He explained he had been detained at the funeral parlor where his wife's body lay. She had died that day.

Then, as an afterthought, he turned to Anita's companion and said, "It would be wonderful if Comrade Anita could say a few words at the funeral services tomorrow. Just a few words. It would mean so much to me. . . ."

"But I don't know the comrade—" Anita said to her companion.

"Anita, you know the life of a worker's wife," he replied. "Just say a few words about what this woman aspired to, what she hoped for, what she lived for."

Anita agreed, and the next morning delivered a brief, simple talk at the bier. The dead woman's children, strangers to the Communist movement, wept. They came forward to wring Anita's hands, to thank her for an apt and wonderful tribute which made them see their own mother in a new and finer light. . . .

II

Anita has a passion for going to the people. Her campaign tours are not a series of speaking engagements. Whenever possible she goes into the homes of the people, those who are poorest, in the slum shacks on the outskirts of town, in the farm labor camps, those who are most oppressed and persecuted, the Negroes and Mexicans. Once she was scheduled to speak in Santa Barbara, and her comrades, knowing she had a strenuous schedule, prepared a room and bed where she could rest prior to her meeting. But when Anita arrived—oh, no, there was

no time to be resting. She took the local party organizer, also a woman, house to house in the Mexican district of Santa Barbara, and the organizer was amazed at the reception they were accorded. And always she returns from such visits with new strength and vigor, with renewed indignation at the poverty and squalor in which human beings must live.

Early in 1942 when San Francisco was agitated by the Audley Cole case, Anita again exhibited this faculty for going directly to the people with their problems. Cole, a young Negro, had passed the examination and met all other requirements for a job as motorman on the municipally operated streetcar line. However, a reactionary clique within the street carmen's union exerted sufficient influence and powers of intimidation to dissuade the working motormen from training the Negro apprentice. The situation developed into a national scandal, and while many complex factors were involved, one of the solutions to the crisis lay in inspiring the rank and file of the carmen's union to repudiate those elements who fostered the Jim Crow exclusion of Cole. Anita reacted by going to the rank and file. For the better part of an entire day, she rode streetcars, getting off one and on to another, talking to conductors and motormen, explaining the harm being done to their own union, to the labor movement, and to the nation, then engaged in a war for its survival necessitating the maximum effort of all the people for victory. Thus she contributed her modest bit toward creating that body of public opinion, in and out of the labor movement, which finally solved the crisis, won Cole the right to the job and admission into the union.

Anita has the deepest sense of responsibility to the

masses. During her 1940 election tour she was in an automobile accident. The car turned over and several of her ribs were broken. It was painful and very serious for a woman of 73, but there were several towns where she had been scheduled to speak and she insisted on filling those engagements. "But the comrades are expecting me," she protested. And only the firm insistence of the party finally dissuaded her, and even then only after she had been promised that as soon as she was well, even after the elections, meetings would be arranged for her in those towns to compensate for the disappointment the local comrades must have felt at her failure to appear.

Her devotion to people is as constant as it is tender. Her solicitude for the health of people, of leading persons in the party, rank and file comrades, non-party people of her acquaintance is no formal matter, it is a deep concern. Some time ago, she undertook to supply a Communist organizer in one of the rural communities with periodicals and literature which the latter could not afford to buy. It is an obligation she fulfills with painstaking care and punctuality. Upon returning from a trip, no matter what its duration, among the first things she does it to gather up *The New Masses*, *The Daily Worker* and other bits of literature, wrap them carefully, and send them off.

Her mother, who died in October, 1927, suffered from failing eyesight during the last years of her life. Those were difficult years for Anita; her criminal syndicalism case was still pending in the courts, she was preoccupied with the fight to save Sacco and Vanzetti, yet she ministered to her mother's needs, read to her aloud for many hours from works she thought her mother would enjoy. As a co-worker of those years said, "She was never too

busy, too absorbed to give this pleasure to her mother. . .” Anita’s capacity for strong human ties is exemplified by her relations with her family. None of the family is sympathetic to her political views, yet with most of them she has maintained the closest bonds, and she commands their respect. One of her nephews is a West Pointer and recently he has corresponded with her, expressing admiration for the Red Army and his amazement at the fact she had known the strength of the Red Army while he, a military man, had not.

Her love for people is no blind abstraction. It is tempered by a keen, and when necessary, a critical appraisal of them. She is proud of the fact that she was among the first to detect one of the most notorious stoolpigeons who once wormed his way into the Communist Party in California. On another occasion, after only a two-day visit to a certain rural community, she reported to the party’s state headquarters that the organizer in that locality was unreliable. Her diagnosis of his failings was so accurate that virtually all her specific predictions of what would happen if he remained in that region were fulfilled.

Stalin has said that modesty is a cardinal virtue of a Bolshevik. Modesty is not only a trait deeply ingrained in Anita, it is a way of life for her. It is expressed most forcibly in her insistent readiness to fulfill the modest tasks, the humble jobs. The faithful regularity with which she reports at Red Cross headquarters to wind bandages is illustrative of this. She insists on distributing leaflets door to door, is regular and punctual in attendance at the meetings of her Communist Party neighborhood branch, and oftentimes pleads that some trip out of town be postponed a day so that she will not miss her branch meeting.

Some years ago she was twice urged to go to the Soviet Union, and each time she refused, insisting that the money and her time could both be expended more usefully in work at home.

Her manner of living, her home are simple to the extreme, in keeping with her innate modesty. During her criminal syndicalism trial and after, the story was assiduously spread that she was a woman of great wealth, and somehow the legend persisted in some quarters. Her foes even used this legend as an argument for her imprisonment. So insidious had that legend become that John Francis Neylan deemed it necessary to dispel it in his pardon plea to Governor Young.

"Under the heading of extenuating circumstances," wrote Neylan, "may I first dissipate a fiction which has been widespread, and which probably accounts for whatever superficial reason has been advanced for the incarceration of Miss Whitney. I refer to the story that she is a woman of great wealth and has had the means to employ counsel to make an unusually vigorous fight in her behalf.

"First let me assure Your Excellency that whatever wealth Miss Whitney inherited was never great. Secondly may I advise you that even her modest inheritance has long since approached the vanishing point, due to her activities in behalf of the poor and lowly, the distressed and suffering and particularly needy children. . . . The records of the State of California, the histories of charitable organizations and the memories of public officials can supply some of the detail of how she served for years without one cent of compensation. Hundreds of men,

women and children not numbered among the affluent can tell a story the narration of which on her own behalf Miss Whitney considers unthinkable."

So simple and unassuming is her mode of life that she keeps well within her modest income and what remains is generously contributed to various anti-Fascist activities and labor causes.

Anita's modesty, her gentleness and kindly warmth, her graciousness and serene poise are characteristics which strike one upon first acquaintance. But these virtues are ennobled by a stout heart, fighting spirit and keen mind. Aroused by some injustice, Anita's voice can be metallic and angry. Involved in a dispute over what she considers a matter of principle, Anita can be adamant, unyielding, and sharp—as the poor pacifist who deplored all violence and yet wore Japanese silk discovered to her discomfort. Her gentleness is no Gandhi-like perversion. It is deeper and richer because she is capable of seizing a milk bottle to defend herself against vigilante hoodlums. The Catholic Monitor in 1920 described her as "a noble and beautiful character who would not crush the broken reed nor quench the burning flax." The Monitor did not fathom the full depth of the nobility and beauty of her character. The Christian ethics which shaped her early attitudes have become tempered by Communist conviction. She not only loves her fellow-man, she is ready to fight for him, and not to fight merely with the abandonment of martyrdom, but to fight to win, to win a better life, a higher social order. She sees in Communism the highest sort of humanism, for it is an activist humanism, not one beatified by abstract platitudes, but one that maintains a constant grip on reality, steers its course to conform to

that reality, and never takes refuge in sham or petty moralisms to escape some of the unpleasantness of reality.

Anita has a passion for life. Once, somewhat abstractedly, she began to cite instances of longevity in her family. So-and-so lived to be 86, so-and-so 87. Someone interrupted, "Oh, Anita, you, the way you live, you will beat them all."

"Do you really think so?" she inquired.

"Of course. . . Really."

She felt more cheerful.

Her passion for living is most radiant in her enthusiasm for nature, in a youthful delight at traveling, especially to places which are new to her. On the road, she is wont to interrupt the most serious political conversation with some exclamation, "Oh, isn't that larkspur wonderful!" And she has a remarkable knowledge of the various species of flowers and trees which dot the California countryside, and she still finds time to tend the flowers outside her home. Going to Los Angeles not long ago, she grew wistful as the car passed by fields of ripening grain. She turned to the driver, "I remember . . . in my youth, going through the midwest and seeing whole fields of grain waving in the wind . . . for miles and miles, as far as the eye could see. . . ." She paused, lost in reminiscence. Then, suddenly, with naive sincerity, she added, "Don't you think we can manage to go by here again some time when the grain has ripened?"

She has a mild distaste for rocking chairs, and an anecdote she has remembered for more than fifty years may explain this furniture quirk. In her youth, she visited the home of a friend of the family. The lady of the house, sitting and knitting in a rocking chair, suddenly

exclaimed, "Oh, how I like to just sit and rot and rot and rot!" Anita was mystified by this unusual preference, and upon returning home told her mother of it. Her mother explained that the poor woman suffered from a speech impediment which transformed many hard consonants into "r".

"I've thought of that later," Anita says, "and I never want to just sit in a chair and rot and rot and rot!"

Old rocking chair will never get Anita. There is too much to do, too much to live for. She does not permit herself the indulgence of old age. She keeps abreast of world events with a keen eye and exhibits a remarkably fine appreciation for change, for the need of readjusting old attitudes and concepts to conform with constantly changing objective reality. She reads a great deal, literary works as well as political tracts or topical books of current interest, all with critical judgment.

In addition to her routine work as a Communist, she has special interests related to the activities of the Communist Party. As always, she is most deeply aroused by some act of injustice and persecution against a spokesman for the working class. In the past year and a half, this indignation at injustice was centered on the case of Earl Browder. She collected hundreds of signatures on petitions requesting Browder's freedom. Through her individual efforts dozens of prominent Californians were induced to intercede personally with President Roosevelt in Browder's behalf. Wherever she went, whether to a meeting of Wellesley alumnae or to visit old associates in the women's suffrage fight, the Browder case became the central topic of conversation. She had taken up the

fight with a crusading zeal born of a sense of deep personal outrage at the thought of a man like Browder being kept behind the bars of a Federal penitentiary.

In the campaign for Browder's freedom, she was associated with Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, whose youthful oratory some thirty years before had helped to awaken Anita's interest in the labor movement and Socialism. In the intervening years Anita had made Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's acquaintance during the latter's frequent trips to the Pacific Coast and long sojourn in Portland, Oregon, and this acquaintance ripened into friendship. Now, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn had become one of the party's leaders, and as secretary of the Citizens Committee To Free Earl Browder, an organizer of the fight to free him.

Anita has always taken a special interest in the work of the Communist Party among women, and in the education and development of women within the party. In pursuit of this special interest, she has been closely associated with her old friend and co-worker, Mother Bloor. These two veterans have maintained a constant and close correspondence in late years on this problem, so near to them both. Anita's interest in work among women stems not so much from the fact that she is a woman, or from long association with the women's movement, dating back to the suffrage fight, but primarily from the Marxist understanding that in capitalist society women are the victims of special exploitation, the social horizons of women are more limited, their lives more warped by the pressure of social norms and economic practice.

A similar motivation is responsible for her more than thirty years of active association with the struggle for

Negro rights. From the days when she was connected with the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in the San Francisco region to the present there has not been one instance of Jim Crow discrimination brought to her attention without an instantaneous effort on her part to right the wrong.

That is, perhaps, most typical of Anita. Wherever injustice is most manifest, wherever persecution is most rife, there her interests lie.

III

Thousands, hundreds of thousands, of persons in California have heard Anita speak from a public platform. Personally, she still prefers to speak out-of-doors at some street corner where the audience is fresher and the atmosphere less formal. Although her public speaking dates back some forty years, she still feels somewhat oppressed by the formality of a talk indoors. She is no orator, yet a quiet sincerity makes her an effective speaker. Take, for example, a recent talk she delivered, a report on the Free-Browder Congress (March 28-29, 1942) to the meeting of the state committee of the Communist Party on April 19, 1942.

A standing ovation greeted her as she mounted the rostrum. She stood there, somewhat embarrassed and uncomfortable, and attempted to dismiss the applause with a modest, impatient little gesture. Her small, trim figure stood upright, clothed in a neat, simple blue outfit; a conservatively flat hat, brightened by a ribbon, was perched atop her head, ordered grey hair protruding in the rear. When the applause ceased, she was perfectly

poised. The audience leaned forward to catch what she had to say. She rested her folded arms on the speaker's stand before her, leaned slightly forward, and began to speak in a soft, placid, narrative tone. As she became more immersed in her talk, her shoulders hunched somewhat and she clasped her hands. For emphasis she leaned further forward, waved her head. The words flowed smoothly, impelled by a direct earnest sincerity, lightened at times by the gentlest humor. They conveyed a personal warmth. She used extensive notes, almost a transcript, but digressed from them frequently to elaborate on a point, or lend it greater emphasis. Soon, her preoccupation with what she had to say loosened some of the earlier restraint, and she tapped the table with her fingers, or permitted herself a slight flourish of the hand. The audience was completely attentive. There was not even the nervous fidgeting so customary in an all-day meeting which then was in its afternoon session. She spoke in a personal vein. She to you. What she said came so directly from her own emotions and thoughts that it was not merely a report of what she had observed and heard; it was a testament of personal conviction. She related her own experiences in the Browder campaign. She told of the prison regime to which Browder was subjected. No visits except by immediate members of the family, and those only once a month. "These are the conditions under which Earl Browder lives today," she said. She understood and explained the political factors involved in Browder's imprisonment, the complex issues which went into the struggle for his release. It was not only a simple act of justice which was sought. Browder's release was a war measure, for America needed his services, his active

mind and ability to lead. His freedom would be a boon to national unity, to the consolidation of those forces actively engaged in the gigantic war effort. She said these things, but beyond that, there was the deep concern for a comrade, for a victim of injustice.

Despite the visible emotion, there was no oratorical crescendo or finale. She concluded with a simple appeal for still greater efforts to free Browder. "That is our duty and we must face it as Bolsheviks."

The thousands who have seen and heard Anita Whitney on a public platform have caught something of her person. It is a common tendency to embellish oneself on the platform. But Anita is so completely free of guile and pretense that she is one of those rare persons who conveys her true self to an audience.

Anita's ceaseless activities to free Browder were crowned with a happy ending. One beautiful San Francisco May morning (it was Saturday, May 16, 1942), her telephone rang. An excited voice on the other side bubbled, "Have you heard the news, Comrade Anita? Earl Browder is free!" Anita's reply was blurred by tears of joy welling up in her throat. . . . It was a joy, as deeply personal as it was social. Yes, Browder's release had vast political meaning. It symbolized the developing national unity, the growing determination to place victory over the Axis above all other considerations. It added a great and valuable force to the fight against Hitler. Yet, it was more. A comrade, a friend was free, back in the ranks, back in the struggle. Anita knew Browder and his family. She had enjoyed visits at the Browder home on her frequent trips to New York. She felt for him not only the attachment of political comradeship, but also the ties of

personal friendship. Browder, in turn, valued very highly her contributions to the party, the things she had come to personify to the party membership and to many thousands outside of the party's ranks.

IV

Anita Whitney, daughter of America in whose veins flows the blood of the nation's revolutionary creators, in her person bridges the gap between America's past and its present and future. Her life, its measured tread, its logical development, is the story of the unfolding of the American ideal. Her attachment to the American tradition is the one thread that runs through it, from early youth until the present day, and her loyalty to that tradition, its revolutionary living meaning, guided her along her inevitable course to Communism. Just as the American revolutionary heritage was handed on by history to the working class, so Anita Whitney, who claimed that heritage as her own, found her identity with the working class, with its most conscious section, the Communist Party.

Once she was asked, "Anita, how do you regard the Communist Party? What has it come to mean to you?"

"Why," she smiled incredulously, a bit taken aback by so amazing a question. "Why . . . it has given purpose to my life. The Communist Party is the hope of the world."

It was a long path she trod, but a straight one. These are the mileposts along that path: social welfare and reform, women's suffrage, political education and organization of women, movements against national oppression,

first association with the working class in the defense of its civil rights, acceptance of Socialism, and, finally, the climax, identification with and leadership in the Communist Party. The story is far from ended. Few people live with such intense concern and preoccupation with the present and the future. Greater battles, greater victories are to come. Anita was first elected to the Communist national committee at the age of 69. Her most vigorous political campaign was waged at 73. At 75 today, she is vital and alert, not an elder immersed in the past, but an amazingly youthful person, a happy combination of the wisdom of age and the eager enthusiasm of youth. She lends to her work and personal relationships human warmth, humor and buoyancy. She is a warm and loveable human being, and the admiration and affection her comrades have for Anita is matched by the pride they take in her.

The writer remembers having interviewed Dr. Norman Bethune, the great Canadian surgeon and Communist who served with the Loyalist armies in Spain and later gave his life while working under unbelievably primitive conditions with the famous Eighth Route Army of China. A young artist came along to the interview to sketch Dr. Bethune. Afterward, the young artist bubbled with enthusiasm. "What a wonderful man!" he exclaimed. "I wish I could borrow him for a while and take him around to my friends, and say, 'See, there is a Communist.' I am sure they would all wish to become Communists, too." Anita evokes such a response.



3 -

42-163

~~002-009~~

